

# Regional Oversight Committee

## Meeting Minutes

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Wednesday, January 14, 2026

1:00 – 4:00pm

LA County Public Works Headquarters, Alhambra Room

900 S. Fremont Ave, Alhambra, CA 91803

Zoom Meeting

### Committee Members Present:

Maria Mehranian, Cordoba/Former Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board Chair, Vice-Chair

Diana Tang, Long Beach Water Department, Chair

Kristine Guerrero, League of California Cities

Belinda Faustinos, Retired NGO & State Agency Executive

Lauren Ahkiam, LAANE

Diana Mahmud, Former City Councilmember, City of South Pasadena

Carl Blum, Los Angeles County Flood Control District (non-voting member)

Norma Camacho, Former Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board Chair (non-voting member)

### Committee Members Attending Virtually:

Barbara Romero, City of Los Angeles

### Committee Members Not Present:

Charles Treviño, Upper San Gabriel Valley Municipal Water District

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### **Meeting Summary:**

The ROC discussed the revised draft 2026 Biennial Progress Report, developed by the Biennial Progress Report Working Group with support from Public Works staff. The ROC voted to open a public comment period for the draft 2026 Biennial Progress Report.

### **Key Action Items:**

- The 2026 Biennial Progress Report will be released for a 30-day Public Comment Period.
- Public Works staff will incorporate requested topics as updates at future ROC meetings, including financial forecasting and fiscal oversight, eligibility requirements, and the Workforce Development Program.
- The Biennial Progress Report Working Group will review additional feedback and incorporate input into recommendations.

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### **1. Welcome and Attendee Instructions**

Diana Tang, Chair of the Safe, Clean Water (SCW) Program Regional Oversight Committee (ROC), welcomed Committee Members and members of the public and called the meeting to order.

### **2. Roll Call**

The Executive Clerk conducted a brief tutorial on Zoom and announced that the meeting was being broadcast live in Spanish.

### **3. Agenda Review and Meeting Purpose**

Chair Tang reviewed the agenda and shared that the purpose of the meeting is to review the draft 2026 Biennial Progress Report and consider initiating a public comment period. Chair Tang shared that the Biennial Progress Report was developed at the direction of the Biennial Progress Report Working Group,

# Regional Oversight Committee

## Meeting Minutes



which included Chair Tang, Member Belinda Faustinos, Member Norma Camacho, Member Diana Mahmud, and Member Carl Blum.

#### 4. *Ex Parte* Communication Disclosures

There were no ex parte communication disclosures.

#### 5. Approval of September 10, 2025 and October 8, 2025 Meeting Minutes

Chair Tang presented the meeting minutes from September 10, 2025, and October 8, 2025. Member Faustinos motioned to approve the September 10 and October 8 meeting minutes, with an amendment made to the October 8 meeting minutes to revise Member Lauren Ahkiam as “present” in the attached attendance tracker. Vice-Chair Maria Mehranian seconded. The September 10 and October 8 meeting minutes were approved with 7 votes in favor, 0 in abstention, and 0 opposed (approved, see vote tracking sheet).

#### 6. Program Administration Updates

Public Works staff provided updates, noting:

- The ROC has one vacant Committee Member seat. Interest forms are available on the [SCW Program website](#). Mid-term appointments are backfilled by the Public Works Director, acting in the role of Chief Engineer of the Los Angeles County Flood Control District, in consultation with the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors (Board) offices.
- Jolene Guerrero will now serve as Public Works' Deputy Director for Water Resources.
- The public comment period for the draft Initial Watershed Plans and Tools closed at the end of September. A summary of the feedback received was presented at the October ROC meeting. Public Works staff is finalizing the draft Initial Watershed Plans according to feedback given by the ROC and Watershed Area Steering Committees (WASCs), as well as at public meetings and through public comments. The final versions will be released in February and an update on Watershed Plans is agendaized for the February ROC meeting.
- The SCW Program Cross-County Working Group kickoff meeting occurred on January 6. The next Working Group meeting will be held in the spring.
- The Community Strengths and Needs Assessment (CSNA) continues to receive survey submissions, currently totaling more than 1,200 responses.
- Public Works staff performed completeness checks on SCW Program applications. Within the Regional Program, three Scientific Study applications were deemed ineligible. Public Works staff is in the process of developing supplemental guidance to help inform Scientific Study applicants in the future.
- The inaugural Scientific Symposium, held in November 2025, demonstrated the scientific spirit of the SCW Program and spotlighted regional collaboration in stormwater science.
- Eight Watershed Coordinator contracts were finalized and commenced on January 1. Of the remaining four contracts, two are pending execution, and two are pending internal review by the County.
- Only one municipal Transfer Agreement remains outstanding, and staff are engaged with that municipality.
- Infrastructure Program Project highlights:
  - Hermosillo Park, a multi-benefit park in the Lower San Gabriel Watershed Area that serves a disadvantaged community, hosted a groundbreaking ceremony on December 6.
  - Via Princessa Park and Regional BMP Project, a multi-benefit park in the Santa Clara River Watershed, will host a groundbreaking at 10:00am on January 22.
- The second County Water Plan (CWP) Annual Board Report highlights key implementation updates from the four Task Forces and has been submitted to the Board. The CWP Dashboard has been updated to reflect the latest available target data.
- Upcoming deadlines:

# Regional Oversight Committee

## Meeting Minutes



- February 15 – Fiscal Year (FY) 2025-26 Mid-Year Regional Reports are due with expenditures from July-December of 2025.
- April 1 – Municipal Plans are due, forecasting revenue for FY2026-27.
- The Scoring Committee scored 29 Infrastructure Program Projects over six meetings. 26 Projects passed the scoring threshold and will move on to WASC consideration. Scoring rubrics for all passing and non-passing Projects are available on the [SCW Program website](#).
- Public Works staff received 31 Project Modification Requests (PMRs). Of the PMRs received, six were deemed unnecessary, five were scheduling changes only, one was withdrawn, 17 were deemed consistent with the relevant Stormwater Investment Plan (SIP), and eight were preliminarily deemed inconsistent. The inconsistent PMRs will return to the relevant WASC for review.
- The existing Scientific Studies Peer Review Panel will provide third-party review summaries to WASCs in the coming weeks.

Member Camacho asked if the Board is looking for specific expertise to fill the vacant ROC seat. Public Works staff shared that the Board is not looking for a specific subject matter expertise, as there are sufficient subject-matter experts on the ROC representing Water Quality, Water Supply, Nature-Based Solutions, and Community Investment Benefits. Member Camacho expressed interest in adding a Committee Member with expertise in Nature-Based Solutions.

Member Mahmud underlined the importance of sharing information on SCW Program Projects' ribbon-cutting ceremonies and requested that Committee Members be notified of future events. Member Mahmud noted that two Projects have yet to submit semi-annual progress reports and suggested that the ROC discuss ramifications for failure to comply with reporting requirements. Member Mahmud also requested that when large reports are under review by the ROC that hardcopy versions be offered for Members in advance of the relevant meeting.

Public Works staff shared that there is a lapsed funds provision stating that funds can be reclaimed if no progress on a given Project is demonstrated for a five-year period. Failure to fulfill reporting requirements could make funds eligible for reclamation.

Member Blum asked if the submitted PMRs point to any trends, commenting that the number of PMRs that Public Works received seemed high. Public Works staff explained that, of the eight inconsistent PMRs, five asked for a collective increase in funding of approximately \$21 million. Three of those five PMRs also noted additional leverage funding of \$21.2 million, demonstrating that projects are also pursuing funding outside of the SCW Program.

### 7. Public Comment Period

Six public comment cards were submitted prior to the meeting and can be found on the [SCW Program website](#). Virtual attendees, call-in users, and in-person attendees were invited to provide public comment.

Katie Evers (Center for Watershed Protection) commented on the importance of the operations & maintenance (O&M) partnership between the City of Pasadena and the Center for Watershed Protection through the Clean Water Certificate Program. Evers shared that the Clean Water Certificate Program provides training to individuals to help meet Los Angeles' regional maintenance needs. Evers commented on the importance of O&M in ensuring regional projects continue to deliver benefits in the future.

Sherreeta White (City of Pasadena) expressed support for the City of Pasadena's proposed Building A Green Infrastructure Workforce in the LA Region Scientific Study proposal. White shared about the City of Pasadena's Municipal Assistance, Solutions, and Hiring (MASH) Program, and commented about the importance of O&M and workforce development's impacts on stormwater capture capacity and the SCW Program.

Dawn Petschauer (City of Pasadena) shared about the City of Pasadena's Building A Green Infrastructure Workforce in the LA Region Scientific Study proposal. Petschauer commented that, while ongoing

# Regional Oversight Committee

## Meeting Minutes

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discussions with Public Works on potential collaborations are underway, nothing has yet been realized. Petschauer expressed that the proposed Scientific Study is aligned with the SCW Regional Program and offers regional benefits. Petschauer highlighted the City of Pasadena's MASH Program and its 40-year partnership with the Center for Watershed Protection and urged the Committee to allow the City to present at Watershed Area Steering Committees to decide where the proposed study is best aligned.

Jeff Khun (City of Pasadena) expressed the need for consistent workforce development training. Khun highlighted the City of Pasadena and Center for Watershed Protection's longstanding Clean Water Certificate Program's success and recommended that the Clean Water Certificate Program be adapted to the specific needs of the region. Khun shared that the City of Pasadena is committed to advancing workforce development and has dedicated \$500,000 of local funds to support the study.

Jessica Rivas (City of Pasadena) commented on the gap between green infrastructure and a trained workforce. Rivas noted that proper maintenance is essential to water quality performance, infiltration capacity, and resiliency. Rivas shared that regional and state partners have expressed strong support and interest in adopting the curriculum once it is developed.

Bruce Reznik (LA Waterkeeper) thanked the Committee for their work on the Biennial Progress Report. Reznik commented that the Biennial Progress Report is critical to ensuring SCW Program goals are met as efficiently and effectively as possible. Reznik highlighted recommendations from the Our Water Los Angeles (OWLA) Coalition letter submitted and available on the SCW Program website. Reznik urged the Committee to direct each WASC to develop a comprehensive 20-year investment plan and suggested that recommendations related to community-oriented aspects of the SCW Program be elevated as critical.

Maggie Gardner (OWLA Coalition) summarized some recommendations from the OWLA Coalition letter. Gardner urged more consistent and clear metrics and definitions for Community Investment Benefits, community engagement and community support, Nature-Based Solutions, Disadvantaged Community Benefits, workforce impacts, and Project Labor Agreement (PLA) compliance. Gardner also commented on the importance of new greenscape and removal of hardscape, the implementation of the District's K-12 and workforce development programs, and more streamlined application processes for smaller projects.

Annelisa Moe (Heal the Bay, OWLA Coalition) reiterated recommendations from Gardner's public comment and urged the ROC to review OWLA's full letter of recommendations. Moe highlighted recommendations to make community engagement a minimum eligibility requirement for future applications and the need for WASCs to develop 20-year investment plans to ensure financial stability.

The ROC discussed public comments made. Member Blum suggested that the Scoring Criteria consider whether applications have an O&M plan, and that projects be designed to be properly maintained. Member Blum emphasized that O&M funding is increasingly critical and should be a focus of the SCW Program. Member Mehranian highlighted that the City of Los Angeles Proposition O funded many infrastructure projects, but the absence of dedicated O&M funding sometimes led to poor performance.

In response to Petschauer's public comment, Member Camacho requested the ROC agendaize an item about project eligibility to better understand how the ROC could provide oversight. Member Camacho concurred with Member Mehranian's comments and suggested dedicated earmarked funding for O&M.

Member Lauren Ahkiam requested that Public Works provide an update on the SCW Program's Workforce Development Program, given several public comments related to workforce development.

### **8. Voting Item: Draft 2026 Biennial Progress Report and Open Public Comment Period**

Public Works staff presented on the Draft 2026 Biennial Progress Report. [Presentation slides](#) and the [Draft 2026 Biennial Progress Report](#) can be found on the SCW Program website.

Member Mehranian noted that the Biennial Progress Report was a collaborative effort and expressed support for initiating the 30-Day Public Comment Period.

# Regional Oversight Committee

## Meeting Minutes

---



Member Mahmud concurred with Member Mehranian and recommended minor revisions. Member Mahmud recommended expanding the bullet points on page eight of the Introduction to include more information about Adaptive Management of the program. Member Mahmud requested that 2025 Project completion dates be updated with actual dates. Member Mahmud emphasized Recommendation Two about financial forecasting and reserves, and highlighted the need to establish more robust contingencies when Projects are approved. Member Mahmud concurred with Members Blum and Camacho on the importance of O&M and suggested that developers identify additional O&M funding beyond SCW Program funding.

Member Ahkiam expressed appreciation for Recommendations Five and Six, which would streamline applications for smaller projects. Member Ahkiam also highlighted Recommendation 11 and suggested more specific reporting requirements be added to better track progress related to compliance with Regional Program requirements around community workforce, targeted local hire, and Project Labor Agreements. Member Ahkiam expressed a desire for the Board to clarify Project Labor Agreement compliance language so project applicants can more clearly understand compliance expectations.

Member Faustinos recommended that community engagement become a minimum requirement for project applications and that it be incorporated into future Scoring Criteria updates.

Member Faustinos thanked the City of Pasadena for providing public comment and highlighted that a report-back on the District's Workforce Development Program will occur at an upcoming meeting. Member Faustinos encouraged the Program to maximize the use of existing workforce development programs across the County.

Member Camacho emphasized the need to communicate both projected and realized Program benefits to the public, particularly as more projects shift from the planning and design phase to the construction phase.

Member Romero noted that green space and workforce development are important aspects of the SCW Program. Member Romero acknowledged that the draft Biennial Progress Report helps the ROC communicate progress and highlight moments of adaptation.

Upon inquiry, Public Works staff shared public comments will be reviewed with the Biennial Progress Report Working Group prior to the March ROC meeting.

Member Faustinos requested that ROC Members receive materials five working days in advance of the relevant ROC meeting, or the Friday before the meeting, to ensure time for review.

Chair Tang motioned to approve the draft Biennial Progress Report and open the 30-day Public Comment Period. Member Guerrero seconded the motion. The motion passed with 7 votes in favor, 0 votes in opposition, and 0 abstentions (approved, see vote tracker).

### **9. Information Item: Anticipated Updates to Regional Program 2026 Call for Projects**

Public Works staff presented anticipated updates to the Regional Program for the Round 8 Call for Projects, which closes July 31, 2026. Presentation slides can be found on the [SCW Program website](#).

Member Faustinos asked if the 2026 Call for Projects for the FY2027-28 SIP will include revisions to the Scoring Criteria. Public Works staff clarified that the major Scoring Criteria revisions related to the draft 2026 Biennial Progress Report's Recommendation 5 would be included in the 2027 Call for Projects for the FY2028-29 SIP (Round 9).

Member Camacho asked how the Watershed Plans are being incorporated into the upcoming 2026 Call for Projects. Public Works staff noted that the addition of the 20<sup>th</sup> Feasibility Study Requirement will request applicants to explain how their project aligns with the Watershed Plans, and that demonstration of Watershed Planning tools will be part of the Call for Projects informational sessions scheduled for late Spring 2026.

# Regional Oversight Committee

## Meeting Minutes

---



Member Ahkiam requested that, in the next round of updates to the SCW Program application, applicants be required to indicate whether their project will be covered by a local workforce agreement. Member Ahkiam suggested that guidance also be included to remind applicants of local hire requirements.

Member Mahmud asked when individual project applications will be required to develop a minimum contingency budget. Public Works staff shared that this requirement could be considered for the 2027 Call for Projects, when Public Works will have more informed financial forecasts.

### **10. Information Item: Two-Year Look Ahead**

Public Works staff shared the intent to develop a two-year schedule for the ROC, to better support timelines for the Biennial Progress Report as well as for Regional, Municipal, and District Program updates.

Chair Tang requested that staff print the Two-Year Look Ahead on larger paper and bring physical copies to each future ROC meeting. Member Mahmud recommended that Public Works consider moving the Winter Recess from December to January to ease the burden on staff.

Member Blum suggested that Regional and Municipal Program updates be reframed as Watershed Updates, expressing that melding these two perspectives would provide important insight into how each aspect of the SCW Program is coming together. Member Blum also highlighted the importance of connecting O&M and workforce development plans, as well as the need to deepen the SCW Program's collaborative partnership with the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Board).

Member Camacho suggested that the ROC review the Board Report from Public Works Director Mark Pestrella that accompanies the Biennial Progress Report. Member Camacho commented that the County Water Plan Regional Water Reliability Task Force lays the groundwork to identify and develop solutions for regulatory and permitting challenges.

### **11. ROC Member Updates**

Member Camacho shared that there is a Regional Board meeting next week to discuss 2025 progress and plans for 2026. Member Camacho expressed an intent to discuss the need for partnership between the Regional Board and the SCW Program.

### **12. Items for Next Agenda / Look Ahead**

Public Works staff shared a look ahead of 2026 ROC meetings, which can be found on the [SCW Program website](#). Items for the next agenda include:

- a. Preview of Initial Watershed Plans to be Published and Review of Approach for Adaptive Plans**

### **13. Meeting Adjourned**

Chair Tang thanked ROC Members and the public and adjourned the meeting at 3:25 PM.