

# Regional Oversight Committee

## Meeting Minutes

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Wednesday, December 11, 2024  
1:00 pm – 3:30 pm  
LA Sanitation Media Center  
2714 Media Center Dr., Los Angeles, CA 90065

### Zoom Meeting

#### Committee Members Present:

Maria Mehranian, Cordoba/Former LA Regional Water Quality Control Board Chair  
Barbara Romero, City of Los Angeles  
Diana Tang, Long Beach Water Department, Vice-Chair  
Belinda Faustinos, Retired NGO & State Agency Executive, Chair  
Mark Gold, Natural Resources Defense Council  
Diana Mahmud, Former City Councilmember, City of South Pasadena  
Carl Blum, LA County Flood Control District (non-voting member)  
Norma Camacho, LA Regional Water Quality Control Board Chair (non-voting member)

#### Committee Members Not Present:

Kristine Guerrero, League of California Cities  
Lauren Ahkiam, LAANE,  
Charles Trevino, Upper San Gabriel Valley Municipal Water District

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### **Meeting Summary:**

At the December 11, 2024 Regional Oversight Committee meeting Committee Members participated in a facilitated discussion about the Watershed Planning effort and Los Angeles (LA) County Water Plan alignment, including:

- Watershed Planning update, focusing on the Watershed Planning Framework that outlines the content in development, envisioned processes, and adaptive management steps for the Initial Watershed Plans scheduled for June 2025.
- LA County Water Plan updates on implementation and the interconnectedness and intersections of that plan with the Safe, Clean Water Program and other initiatives.

### **Key Action Items:**

- Public Works will provide meeting notes from the Water Quality Working Group and Community Investment Benefit and Benefit Ratios Working Group as attachments to an upcoming ROC Meeting and agendize a discussion and action item for the ROC to discuss and potentially act to incorporate the recommendations of those Working Groups in the 2025 Biennial Report.
- Public Works will consider the recommendation to incorporate a Public Comment period for the Initial Watershed Plans.
- Public Works will continue to coordinate with Chairs to refine 2025 ROC meeting schedule and topics, including the potential formation of a Scientific Studies technical advisory group.
- Public Works will task Regional Coordination and the Watershed Coordinators with broadly sharing the Community Strengths & Needs Assessment survey with municipalities and other interested parties.

# Regional Oversight Committee

## Meeting Minutes



### 1) Welcome and Attendee Instructions

Belinda Faustinos, Chair of the Safe Clean Water (SCW) Program Regional Oversight Committee (ROC), welcomed Committee Members and called the meeting to order.

### 2) Roll Call

The Executive Clerk conducted roll call and confirmed that a quorum was present.

### 3) Agenda Review and Meeting Purpose

Chair Faustinos shared that the ROC will receive SCW Program Watershed Planning updates, focusing on the Watershed Planning Framework that outlines the content in development, envisioned process, and adaptive management steps for the Initial Watershed Plans scheduled for June 2025. The Committee will also receive a presentation on LA County Water Plan and how it is aligned with the goals of the SCW Program, and how they are interconnected.

### 4) *Ex Parte* Communication Disclosures

There were no ex parte communication disclosures.

### 5) Approval of November 13, 2024 Meeting Minutes

Member Diana Mahmud motioned to approve the meeting minutes, seconded by Member Mark Gold. The Committee voted to approve the November 13, 2024, meeting minutes with 7 votes in favor, 0 opposed, and 1 in abstention (approved, see vote tracking sheet).

### 6) Public Comment Period

There were no public comment cards received by 5:00pm the day before the meeting. Participants on the Spanish translation line and call-in users were also invited to provide public comment.

Maggie Gardner (LA Waterkeeper) provided public comment, expressing an interest in learning how Watershed Planning and Adaptive Management efforts align with the County Water Plan, Nature-based Solutions Blue Ribbon Panel, and the upcoming SCW Program Biennial Report. Gardner also inquired about how the engagement and feedback from the Watershed Area Steering Committees (WASCs), Scoring Committee, and ROC will be incorporated into the Initial Watershed Plans. Additionally, Gardner asked if there will be a public comment period for the draft Initial Watershed Plans.

Susie Santilena (City of Los Angeles Sanitation and Environment (LASAN), Co-chair of the Central Santa Monica Bay WASC, and Member of South Santa Monica Bay WASC) provided public comment, noting that LASAN, as both an applicant agency and an active participant, hopes the ROC would discuss the timeline for achieving Watershed Planning goals, balancing achievable, realistic, and ambitious goals. Santilena recommended that Watershed Planning efforts be streamlined as much as possible to minimize administrative burdens. Furthermore, Santilena shared that the City of Los Angeles is looking forward to updates on the Community Strengths and Needs Assessment and alignment with the Community Outreach and Engagement Strategic Plan for City of Los Angeles' SCW Program.

### 7) Discussion Item:

#### a. Watershed Planning Framework Presentation

Los Angeles County Public Works (Public Works) staff presented on the Watershed Planning Framework. Presentation slides can be found on the [SCW Program website](#).

# Regional Oversight Committee

## Meeting Minutes



In response to Member Gold's inquiry about what the ROC was supposed to do with the current Framework, Public Works reiterated the value of the ROCs guidance and emphasized its commitment to a transparent process, incorporating ROC guidance and stakeholder input to build from the Framework to establish Initial Watershed Plans. Public Works staff explained that input from working groups has been integrated into the process and noted that additional dedicated public comment opportunities (beyond those built into current WASC workshops) are expected during the adaptive management phase of Watershed Plans. Initial Watershed Plans were one of the primary recommendations from the previous Biennial Report and will play a critical role in shaping future SCWP outcomes. Recommendations for further refinement of Watershed Plans can also be included in future ROC Biennial Reports.

Vice-Chair Diana Tang observed that ROC feedback has been consistently incorporated into decision-making, even if the process has not always followed a linear path.

Member Carl Blum voiced concern about the complexity of the Watershed Planning process and reiterated the need to identify clear, measurable goals within the Watershed Plans which can be used by developers and decision makers. Chair Faustinis acknowledged these concerns, stating that Watershed Plans will indeed guide the SCW Program and is the next step in establishing measurable goals and performance metrics. The Framework presented today provided a preview of some of those tangible goals that are based on many of the metrics and measures discussed by the ROC in its strategy sessions earlier in the year.

Member Gold congratulated staff on the work completed to date within a compressed schedule and highlighted the importance of using the best available science and monitoring outcomes. Member Gold noted that the presentation slide summarizing the ROC Water Quality Working Group does not fully summarize the main takeaways of the discussions and described the Working Group as having agreed to recommend that the existing County-wide Water Quality target of meeting water quality standards by 2038 be a component of the Initial Watershed Plans. Public Works staff elaborated on the Watershed Planning Framework, clarifying that load-reduction indicators, interim project-based performance metrics, and watershed-specific pollutant targets will be addressed in Initial Watershed Plans, which is consistent with the SCW Program goal to "improve water quality and contribute to attainment of water-quality requirements."

Chair Faustinis suggested formally documenting the findings of the Water Quality Working Group, particularly its overarching recommendations, to ensure alignment. Member Gold proposed that recommendations from the ROC be shared with WASCs and that the notes from working group meetings be widely distributed to enhance collaboration and transparency.

Member Norma Camacho underscored the importance of achieving consensus around the County-wide target of meeting water quality standards by 2038. Member Camacho suggested that a discussion on the Water Quality Working Group's findings be included in the January ROC meeting agenda to further this effort. Member Barbara Romero recommended mirroring the process and discussion structure used earlier in the ROC's previous Water Supply Working Group, where one representative of the working group reported on discussion and findings to the entire ROC, allowing Committee Members to provide feedback and reach consensus.

Vice-Chair Tang emphasized that MS4 compliance should remain the SCW Program's central focus, serving as a foundation for additional benefits.

Member Mahmud raised concerns about the feasibility of the timeline for developing and reviewing Watershed Plans and recommended an extension to the Call for Projects beyond the proposed July 2025 deadline. The Committee suggested that Watershed Plans be presented to the ROC as they are completed, in a staggered fashion to allow for more thorough review and the integration of public input, rather than reviewing all 9 Watershed Areas' plans simultaneously. Additionally, Member Mahmud recommended structured guidance for WASCs to effectively review the Watershed Plans before the ROC reviews them.

# Regional Oversight Committee

## Meeting Minutes



The Committee underscored the importance of consistent public engagement throughout the Watershed Planning process, particularly incorporating feedback from diverse community sectors, including city departments, town councils, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

Mike Antos (Stantec, Regional Coordination) provided comments on the Community Strengths and Needs Assessment, which was informed by the state-funded Disadvantaged Communities and Tribal Involvement Program (WaterTalks) initiative. The survey is open to the public and will result in geolocated insights about community needs and priorities. Member Mahmud suggested engaging municipalities in the Program area to share the tool and the process for gathering community feedback, to enhance its reach and impact.

The Committee discussed its role in the Watershed Planning process, acknowledging that while the ROC may not be involved in any formal voting, the Committee's recommendations carry significant influence. Member Mahmud reiterated her concerns about how the public may feel excluded from the process, questioning whether there were adequate opportunities for input and engagement. Public Works staff clarified that public comments are integral to all Brown Act meetings and committed to consulting ROC chairs on additional ways to ensure inclusive participation. Public Works staff will continue to provide further updates in future meetings.

### **b. County Water Plan Overview/Update & Intersecting Initiatives**

Public Works staff presented an overview and update about the County Water Plan and highlighted intersecting initiatives with the SCW Program. Presentation slides can be found on the [SCW Program website](#).

Upon inquiry, Public Works staff shared that the InfrastructureLA Water Committee is creating a database, aligned with the County Water Plan's Regional Water Reliability Task Force, to support recycled water projects and other key water projects to help them move forward. InfrastructureLA has also been successful in securing significant funding for the transportation sector and hopes to secure more funding for water projects.

Member Camacho asked about opportunities for the Scientific Studies Program to collaborate with the County Water Plan on permitting issues and technologies outlined in Strategy 6, including managing solvent concentrates and PFAS. Public Works staff emphasized LA County's role in convening and fostering collaboration through County Water Plan Task Forces and InfrastructureLA, highlighting the potential for expanded efforts as additional resources and funding become available.

## **8) Watershed Coordinators Update**

### **a. WC Schools Working Group**

Upper Los Angeles River Watershed Coordinator Kristina Kreter and Upper San Gabriel River Watershed Coordinator James Cortes presented an update on the Watershed Coordinator Schools Working Group. Presentation slides can be found on the [SCW Program website](#).

Member Mahmud noted that the Plymouth Elementary School tour was well-executed. Member Mahmud commented that schools in underserved areas often have physical barriers and suggested that green campuses be opened to community members outside of school hours so other community members could also benefit from nature-based solutions.

Member Camacho suggested addressing school greening goals in a programmatic way, considering opportunities to allocate funding across a suite of priority schools rather than individual funding awards, and opportunities to streamline the application process for school proponents.

Member Gold asked if an inventory of green schools in the County and Best Management Practices (BMPs) exists. Watershed Coordinator Cortes noted that an inventory could be created. Member Gold also inquired

# Regional Oversight Committee

## Meeting Minutes



about leveraging additional funding available with the passing of recent ballot measures, such as Proposition 4 and City of Los Angeles' Measure US, for related projects, and encouraged the Watershed Coordinators to develop a proactive strategy with a list of prioritized schools to secure funding.

Member Blum requested additional metrics on water captured in the descriptions of projects. Member Barbara Romero asked how many of the funded Infrastructure Program Projects and Technical Resource Program Project concepts are treating off-site water. Watershed Coordinators confirmed that some projects are addressing off-site water and will follow up with additional information.

Member Romero also asked who is maintaining the projects and whether a workforce has been supporting the schools to ensure continuity. Member Maria Mehranian sought clarification on whether any state or Los Angeles Unified School District bonds have been allocated or earmarked for funding purposes.

Vice-Chair Tang shared that Long Beach Unified School District is collaborating with the City of Long Beach to further workforce development efforts and build a network of skilled trades. Long Beach Unified School District High Schools are launching a workforce development program that focuses on various utility-jobs. The City of Long Beach is working with the School District to explore creating additional opportunities related to stormwater and Operations and Maintenance (O&M).

Chair Faustinos agreed with Member Camacho's recommendation to prioritize schools as the next objective for the SCW Program and suggested that it be considered a programmatic goal that could be identified in next Biennial Progress Report.

### **9) Voting Items**

There were no voting items.

### **10) ROC Member Updates**

Member Mahmud requested an accounting of funds spent on the Water Foundation's Community Outreach and Education Grants Program. Chair Faustinos noted that these funds have not yet been awarded, and applicants will likely receive notification of awards by the end of January.

Member Camacho shared that the November meeting of the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board was canceled, but a meeting is scheduled for December 19.

### **11) Program Administration & Biennial Report Updates**

Public Works staff provided an update, noting:

- The Public Education and Community Engagement Grants Program, a collaboration with the Water Foundation, formally launched on September 24. The first application deadline was November 8, which solicited 26 applications. As expected, most applications requested the full grant amount. The next collection dates are January 31, 2025 and April 4, 2025, closing on May 31, 2025.
- The Credit Trading Program that is currently in development hosted its latest Stakeholder Workshop on October 30. The procedures and guidelines document was available for a 30-day public comment period until November 18. The Credit Trading Program is expected to launch in 2025, with a tentative application deadline in September 2025.
- Key info for the next Watershed Coordinators Services RFP (evaluations in progress), the Credit Program (applications due 12/31/24), and the Municipal Program (annual disbursements in progress).

### **12) Look-ahead and Items for Next Agenda**

- a. 2025 Preview**
- b. Update on Adaptive Management**

# Regional Oversight Committee

## Meeting Minutes



Public Works staff shared a 2025 Preview of the ROC's proposed monthly meeting schedule that was coordinated with the Chairs and noted that the Committee will begin working towards the Biennial Progress Report at the very beginning of 2025. The 2025 Preview can be found in the presentation slides on the [SCW Program website](#).

Member Gold suggested forming a Scientific Studies Program technical advisory group and allowing the ROC to review and comment on the draft SCW Program Initial Watershed Plans. The review will provide an opportunity to formally discuss and assess how effectively the Initial Watershed Plans align with the guiding principles and objectives outlined in the Watershed Planning Framework. Antos encouraged the ROC to approach the review process with the understanding that these are Watershed Plans rather than Watershed Management Plans. Member Blum suggested the potential to share one Initial Watershed Plan as a template before finalizing all nine.

Public Works staff shared that the next ROC meeting is scheduled for January 8, 2025 at 1:00 pm. WASC and Scoring Committee Chairs have been invited to attend and share updates and recommendations on the Biennial Report.

### **13) Meeting Adjourned**

Chair Faustinos thanked ROC Members and the public and adjourned the meeting at 3:39 pm.

Regional Oversight Committee - December 11, 2024			
	Quorum Present		
Member Type	Member	Present?	Approve the November 13, 2024 Meeting Minutes
Voting Member	Maria Mehranian	X	Abstain
Voting Member	Barbara Romero	X	Y
Voting Member	Diana Tang	X	Y
Voting Member	Kristine Guerrero		
Voting Member	Belinda Faustinos	X	Y
Voting Member	Lauren Ahkiam		
Voting Member	Charles Trevino		
Voting Member	Mark Gold	X	Y
Voting Member	Diana Mahmud	X	Y
Non-Voting Member	Carl Blum	X	
Non-Voting Member	Norma Camacho	X	
Total Non-Vacant Seats	9	Yay (Y)	5
Total Voting Members Present	6	Nay (N)	0
		Abstain (A)	0
		Total	5
			Approved





## Public Comment Form

Name\*: Maggie Gardner

Organization\*: LA Waterkeeper

Email\*: maggie@la.waterkeeper.org

Phone\*: (310) 651-3360

Meeting: PDC

Date: 12/11/24

☒ LA County Public Works may contact me for clarification about my comments

\*Per Brown Act, completing this information is optional. At a minimum, please include an identifier so that you may be called upon to speak.

Phone participants and the public are encouraged to submit public comments (or a request to make a public comment) to [SafeCleanWaterLA@ddpw.lacounty.gov](mailto:SafeCleanWaterLA@ddpw.lacounty.gov). All public comments will become part of the official record.

Please complete this form and email to [SafeCleanWaterLA@ddpw.lacounty.gov](mailto:SafeCleanWaterLA@ddpw.lacounty.gov) by at least 5:00pm the day prior to the meeting with the following subject line: "Public Comment: [Watershed Area] [Meeting Date]" (ex. "Public Comment: USGR 4/8/20").

### Comments

in person



# Regional Oversight Committee Meeting

## COMMITTEE MEMBER SIGN-IN



Member Name	Municipality/ Organization	Email Address	Signature
Voting Members			
Barbara Romero	City of Los Angeles		Barbara Romero
Belinda Faustinos	Nature For All		Belinda Faustinos
Charles Trevino	Upper San Gabriel Valley MWD		—
Diana Tang	City of Long Beach		—
Mark Gold	NRDC		Mark Gold
Diana Mahmud	Former City Councilmember, City of South Pasadena		Diana Mahmud
Kristine Guerrero	League of Cities		—
Lauren Ahkiam	LAANE		—
Maria Mehranian	Cordoba / Former RWQCB Chair		Maria Mehranian
Non-Voting Members			
Carl Blum	Flood Control District		Carl Blum
Norma Camacho	LA Regional Water Quality Control Board Chair		Norma Camacho

# Regional Oversight Committee Meeting

PUBLIC SIGN-IN



**PUBLIC COPY- DO NOT REMOVE.**

First Name	Last Name	Municipality/Organization	Email Address
JAMES <del>CORTES</del>	CORTES	USAR we for SCWP	
Maggie	Gardner	LA waterkeeper	
Robyn	Finley	Stantec	
Susie	Santilena	LA Sanitation & Envi.	
Mike	Scadun	LA SAN	

\*Signing or completing this form is voluntary for members of the public



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Name\*: Maggie Gardner

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### Comments

in person

## Attendee Report

Report Ger #####

Topic Webinar ID

Regional O 958 1669 3605

### Host Details

Attended User Name (Original Name)

Yes Meeting Room (Craig Moyle)

### Panelist Details

Attended User Name (Original Name)

Yes Javier Interpreter (Javier)

Yes JavierAudience (Javier Morrone)

Yes Javier Audience (Javier Morrone)

Yes EN<>ES Interpreter Daniela Guanipa

Yes Executive Clerk (Mike Antos) (Mike Antos (Stantec))

### Attendee Details

Attended User Name (Original Name)

Yes Hans Tremmel

Yes Lisa Skutecki

Yes Paige Bistromowitz - LASAN

Yes 1.63E+10

Yes 1.63E+10

Yes Justin Jones

Yes Ryanna Fossum (Regional Coordination)

Yes Ryanna Fossum (Regional Coordination)

Yes Fred Gonzalez - LACFCD

Yes JonPaul Sarro

Yes Drew Ready

Yes Javier

Yes Javier

Yes Javier

Yes Javier Audience

Yes Stacy Luell, Herrera

Yes Stacy Luell, Herrera

Yes Stacy Luell, Herrera

Yes	Stacy Luell, Herrera
Yes	Craig Doberstein (Herrera)
Yes	LeslieFriedman-Johns
Yes	Mark Yanai
Yes	Alexander Iglesias
Yes	Kirk Allen
Yes	Ava Farriday
Yes	Raina Dwivedi
Yes	Sean Phan
Yes	Emily Ng (she/her)
Yes	Jack Mikesell
Yes	Mateo Yang   RIOS
Yes	Justin Jones
Yes	Richard Watson
Yes	Brenda Ponton
Yes	Dee Corhiran
Yes	Tiffani Shin
Yes	johanna
Yes	johanna
Yes	johanna
Yes	BrendaRojasCala
Yes	Mike Antos (Stantec)
Yes	Rebecca Kaliff
Yes	Rebecca Kaliff
Yes	Larry Tran
Yes	Melanie Rivera
Yes	MB
Yes	MB
Yes	VCarrillo
Yes	Haley Lawton City of Santa Clarita
Yes	BruceReznik
Yes	Robyn F.
Yes	Darin Seegmiller (City of Santa Clarita)
Yes	Marisol Ibarra (LASAN)

Yes	Justin Jones
Yes	Justin Jones
Yes	steve watson
Yes	Thom Epps (Craftwater)
Yes	Valeria Mena
Yes	Conor Mossavi
Yes	Raina Dwivedi
Yes	Brett Perry
Yes	Devon Provo
Yes	Devon Provo
Yes	Alonso Garcia
Yes	Jason Casanova, Council for Watershed Health
Yes	David Lee - LACPW
Yes	Luke Ginger (He/Him SMBRC)
Yes	Lisa Beutler