



Regional Oversight Committee Memo

To: Safe, Clean Water Program
Regional Oversight Committee

From: Safe, Clean Water Program
Regional Coordination Team

Date: June 2, 2025

Summary of Watershed Coordinators Input for Consideration in the ROC's 2025 Biennial Progress Report

Purpose & Background

At the May 14, 2025, Regional Oversight Committee (ROC) meeting, the Regional Coordination Team and three Watershed Coordinators presented various considerations, on behalf of all twelve Watershed Coordinators, related to the development of the ROC's 2025 Biennial Progress Report. This memo summarizes the common themes shared, including details on the Safe, Clean Water (SCW) Program's progress and areas for improvement.

Many program elements referenced in the Watershed Coordinators presentation are currently being evaluated and/or addressed through annual updates to Watershed Coordinators' Strategic Outreach and Engagement Plans and ongoing adaptive management efforts, including 2025 Interim Guidance and Watershed Planning efforts. SCW Program staff will assist the ROC in identifying and articulating relevant progress on adaptive management efforts to focus the 2025 Biennial Progress Report recommendations.

Community Feedback Heard by Watershed Coordinators

As part of their role, Watershed Coordinators engage with various interested parties, including community members, non-profit and community-based organizations, municipalities, agencies, and potential Project Applicants. The following recommendations were frequently heard by Watershed Coordinators when engaging with interested parties.

Simplify the Application & Reporting Process

Interested parties have conveyed recommendations to streamline and shorten the length of SCW Program applications. A simpler application would make it easier for potential applicants, especially those with less capacity and resources, to submit applications.

Watershed Coordinators have also heard from interested parties that the SCW Program reporting process is complex and repetitive and often becomes a challenge for under-resourced Project Developers. To address this challenge, Watershed Coordinators highlighted opportunities to further explore a simplified application and reporting structure, especially for community-based organizations. To address the various complexities of SCW Program reporting, interested parties have suggested dedicated support beyond the SCW Program email, such as a "help desk" or point of contact, for Project Developers to ask clarifying questions related to the reporting process in a timely manner.

Accelerate Timelines to Increase Responsiveness to Urgent Needs

Watershed Coordinators reflected that accelerating timelines for funding approval could increase the Program's ability to respond to time-sensitive priorities shared by interested parties, such as projects that support recent fire recovery, promote school greening, or address flooding. Fire recovery and flooding are often time-sensitive issues that should be prioritized to increase local Community Investment Benefits. Similarly, school greening projects often function on a constrained timeline to navigate the school year schedule and avoid construction interruptions during regular school activities.



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Support Environmental Restoration & Green Space Acquisition

Community members have expressed a desire to better understand how the SCW Program is responding to its ability to support open space acquisition or restoration described in the SCW Program Ordinance, as it is a strategy considered important to several of the less developed watershed areas. Watershed Coordinators also shared consistent interested party reflection on the importance of promoting the conversion of hardscapes to green spaces.

Watershed Coordinators highlighted the Los Angeles County Water Plan Nature-Based Solutions Task Force and its Blue Ribbon Panel, which is producing recommendations to generate nature-based solutions throughout the County. There are opportunities to elevate and align the panel's recommendations with SCW Program project development and evaluation.

Feedback about the Technical Resources Program

The Watershed Coordinator program is a component of, and derives funding through, the Technical Resources Program (TRP) and each of the 12 Watershed Coordinator positions are contracted with Los Angeles County Public Works (Public Works). In addition to engaging with interested parties, Watershed Coordinators participate in Technical Assistance Teams that are assigned to SCW Program-funded TRP projects. The following themes reflect areas in which Watershed Coordinators could be directed to strengthen the TRP.

Provide Robust Support for Community-Based & Non-Profit Organizations

Public Works could direct Watershed Coordinators to prioritize robust technical support to community-based organizations, non-profit organizations, and underserved communities in developing TRP Project Concepts. Public Works could also continue to build on existing resources, such as the 2025 Interim Guidance on Community Engagement, which includes helpful information on supporting inclusive project development.

Align with Regional Efforts

Various ongoing efforts throughout the region overlap with aspects of the SCW Program. Public Works could direct Watershed Coordinators to prioritize collaboration with related regional efforts such as the Parks Needs Assessment 2.0 and the OurCounty Sustainability Plan 2025 Refresh to better integrate SCW Program Goals.

Fund Community Engagement Efforts

Watershed Coordinators highlighted the importance of the SCW Public Education and Community Engagement Grant Program in bridging the gap between community-led concepts and full TRP applications.

Watershed Coordinators identified a gap that proponents of TRP efforts do not receive funding to participate alongside the assigned Technical Assistance Team, which can be a burden for a low-resource proponent. Watershed Coordinators recommended the SCW Program explore dedicating funding in TRP project budgets so the Project Proponent receives funding / compensation to participate alongside Public Works staff and the assigned Technical Assistance Team throughout the TRP process. This investment would help smaller entities participate in the TRP process and ensure that community voices are centered from the beginning of project conceptualization.

Achieve a Full Spectrum of Project Sizes

To advance the SCW Program Ordinance Goal of achieving a full spectrum of project types and sizes, Watershed Coordinators recommend the continued prioritization and implementation of smaller, community-led initiatives. These project types tend to be more feasible for small cities and community-



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based organizations and promote equitable Community Investment Benefits across the region, such as expanding green space and reducing impermeable surfaces.

Additionally, Public Works could encourage Project Proponents and Watershed Area Steering Committees (WASCs) to consider awarding TRP funding towards identifying potential project areas for more distributed community-led benefits and non-traditional locations (e.g., alleys, vacant lots, small neighborhood nodes). This is different than current practice because TRP applications require a specific project location to be identified, rather than an area, or several potential locations.

Lastly, after Initial Watershed Plans are released, Public Works could direct Watershed Coordinators focus on supporting project development in the opportunity areas where no projects have been proposed or supported.

Ideas for Watershed Coordinators to Support Long-Term SCW Program Goals

The following themes summarize input about how Watershed Coordinators envision their continued role in supporting adaptive management of the Program and long-term efforts.

Support Long-term Maintenance & Job Creation

Watershed Coordinators can continue sharing guidance to WASCs about retaining funds for ongoing project operations & maintenance (O&M), especially in Watershed Areas with smaller cities and limited resources. The link between O&M for the long-term sustainability of projects and local workforce development opportunities can be documented and shared with the WASC. O&M may be considered an expense; however, those expenditures result in meaningful local jobs.

Implement Initial Watershed Plans

Watershed Coordinators can be tasked by Public Works to implement elements of Initial Watershed Plans, including project identification that align with opportunity areas and elevating community priorities. Watershed Coordinators can also work with Public Works to provide and disseminate project examples and typologies, or specific Best Management Practices that align with watershed needs and opportunity areas.

Support Coordination & Knowledge Sharing

Public Works can more strongly encourage Project Applicants to engage with Watershed Coordinators prior to submitting SCW Regional Program applications. Watershed Coordinators can be tasked to facilitate knowledge sharing, for example, sharing results from funded SCW Program Scientific Studies and linking these findings to new TRP and Infrastructure Program project applications. In addition, as projects and studies funded by the SCW Program are completed, Watershed Coordinators can also be tasked with bringing best practices forward to other Project Developers and Applicants.