

# Regional Oversight Committee

## Meeting Minutes

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Wednesday, June 11, 2025

1:00pm – 4:00pm

LA County Public Works Headquarters, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor (Courtyard) Conference Rooms A&B  
900 S. Fremont Ave, Alhambra, CA 91803

### Zoom Meeting

#### Committee Members Present:

Maria Mehranian, Cordoba/Former LA Regional Water Quality Control Board

Barbara Romero, City of Los Angeles

Kristine Guerrero, League of Cities

Belinda Faustinos, Retired NGO & State Agency Executive, Chair

Charles Trevino, Upper San Gabriel Valley Municipal Water District

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 (non-voting member)

#### Committee Members Not Present:

Lauren Ahkiam, LAANE

Diana Tang, Long Beach Water Department, Vice-Chair

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### **Meeting Summary:**

At the June 11 2025 Regional Oversight Committee (ROC) meeting, Committee Members reviewed the Fiscal Year 2025-26 Stormwater Investment Plans (SIPs) for the Central Santa Monica Bay, Lower Los Angeles River, Lower San Gabriel River, and Santa Clara River Watershed Areas, and concluded that all four SIPs help achieve SCW Program Goals and should be recommended for approval by the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors. The ROC also received an update from Public Works staff about Adaptive Management Board Motion items.

### **Key Action Items:**

- Public Works directed the Executive Clerk to follow up with materials and information requested by specific members of the ROC related to the [Scientific Studies element of the Regional Program](#), the [Community Strengths & Needs Assessment](#), the [Project Modification Guidelines](#), and the [Watershed Planning presentations](#) provided to the Watershed Area Steering Committees during May and June, 2025.
  - Public Works will continue to integrate ROC requests into work products, specifically improved tables and descriptions for FY 2026-27 Stormwater Investment Plan Transmittals.
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### **1. Welcome and Attendee Instructions**

Belinda Faustinos, 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 roll call and confirmed that a quorum was present.

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### 1. Agenda Review and Meeting Purpose

Chair Belinda Faustinos reviewed the agenda and noted that the focus of the meeting is to review the Fiscal Year 2025-26 Stormwater Investment Plans (SIPs) from four of the nine Watershed Area Steering Committees (WASCs). The ROC will review SIPs from Central Santa Monica Bay, Lower Los Angeles River, Lower San Gabriel River, and Santa Clara River WASCs. The ROC will also receive a presentation updating efforts on the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors' (Board) motion on Adaptive Management items.

### 3. *Ex Parte* Communication Disclosures

No ex parte communications were disclosed.

### 4. Approval of May 14, 2025, Meeting Minutes

Chair Faustinos presented meeting minutes from the previous meeting. Member Mark Gold motioned to approve the meeting minutes, seconded by Member Maria Mehranian. The Committee voted to approve the May 14, 2025, meeting minutes with 5 votes in favor, 0 opposed, 0 in abstention and 4 absent at the time of the vote (approved, see vote tracking sheet).

### 5. Public Comment Period

There were no written or verbal public comments received.

### 6. Discussion Items

#### a. Fiscal Year 2025-26 Stormwater Investment Plans

Los Angeles County Public Works (Public Works) provided an overview of SIP Programming guidance and Project Modification Request (PMR) guidance that had been provided to the WASCs. Presentation slides can be found on the [SCW Program website](#). Ryanna Fossum (Stantec, Regional Coordination) provided an overview of the four proposed SIPs for Central Santa Monica Bay, Lower Los Angeles, Lower San Gabriel, and Santa Clara River Watershed Areas. Representatives from the respective WASCs were in attendance to provide additional context about the Watershed Area and SIP deliberation process.

Member Gold requested more detailed project information be made available to the ROC. Upon inquiry, Public Works staff shared that the ROC's role is to conduct broad programmatic reviews of each SIP, evaluating how each of them aligns with and advances SCW Program Goals. Chair Faustinos added that there is both a high-level Executive Summary and more granular data available within the SIP Transmittal documents. Chair Faustinos encouraged Committee Members to attend WASC meetings, which offer greater insight into individual project contexts and decisions.

#### i. Central Santa Monica Bay Watershed Area

Central Santa Monica Bay (CSMB) WASC Co-Chairs Rita Kampalath and Susie Santilena reported that the CSMB WASC prioritized funding projects that serve disadvantaged communities, while also balancing Water Quality objectives. The CSMB WASC also emphasized support for continuing projects, noting a desire to complete ongoing efforts rather than leave projects stranded.

The Co-Chairs highlighted the extensive discussions that took place about PMRs that requested additional funding, and noted that the Project Developer for the Washington Boulevard Stormwater and Urban Runoff Diversion PMR had demonstrated effort to leverage external funding.

CSMB WASC Co-Chair Santilena shared that the CSMB WASC has not experienced as much of a funding constraint as other WASCs, commenting that the regionwide pause on Infrastructure Program (IP) funding for the Fiscal Year (FY) 2025-26 cycle impacted several previously funded Technical Resources Program (TRP) projects in the Watershed Area that were ready to apply to IP funding. CSMB WASC Co-Chair Santilena suggested that future funding pauses be implemented on a WASC-by-WASC basis if needed, to minimize disruption in Watershed Areas that may not be experiencing severe funding constraints.

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Upon inquiry, CSMB Co-Chair Santilena clarified that the Washington Boulevard Stormwater and Urban Runoff Diversion PMR resulted in decreased Water Supply Benefits, however, the Project Developer attempted to balance this change by increasing Water Quality Benefits and expanding the project to a more regional scale. Member Camacho noted that including this type of project background and explanation of benefit tradeoffs in the SIP Transmittal documentation would have been helpful to inform decision-making.

### **ii. Lower Los Angeles River Watershed Area**

Lower Los Angeles River (LLAR) WASC Member Manny Gonez emphasized that geographic distribution and Disadvantaged Community Benefits were top project funding priorities. LLAR WASC Member Gonez shared that, due to previous funding commitments, the WASC was unable to follow the guidance received to reserve 20% of available funding for future fiscal years.

LLAR WASC Member Gonez noted that discussion during the SIP deliberation process focused on the PMR for Long Beach Municipal Urban Stormwater Treatment (LB-MUST) Phase 1. WASC Members raised concerns about the potential for PMRs to be used to circumvent the established IP application process. LLAR WASC Member Gonez shared that all IP Project Developers were asked if project funding could be deferred, but none indicated flexibility to delay. Therefore, the WASC was unable to fund the PMR.

The LLAR WASC expressed strong support for the Scientific Study application received, with recognition that Scientific Studies provide critical data and insights that can inform future TRP and IP proposals. LLAR WASC Member Gonez shared that WASC Members expressed interest in developing clearer guidance or guardrails for evaluating PMRs to ensure consistency and transparency in future cycles.

### **iii. Lower San Gabriel River Watershed Area**

Lower San Gabriel River (LSGR) WASC Co-Chair Dan Mueller reported that five new Scientific Studies were presented to the WASC, with three studies standing out as providing the greatest benefits to the Watershed Area. LSGR Co-Chair Mueller provided overviews of the Scientific Studies proposed in the SIP, highlighting their focus on advancing understanding of stormwater treatment technologies, tracking contaminants to support pollution prevention efforts, and informing design improvements for future projects.

LSGR WASC Co-Chair Mueller shared that the SIP deliberation included a discussion of the three PMRs received, two of which requested additional funding. The Skylinks Golf Course at Wardlow Channel Stormwater Capture Project requested additional funds and the PMR Developer had leveraged external funding. The Hermosillo Park Regional Stormwater Project submitted a significant funding increase request. LSGR WASC Co-Chair Mueller shared that, despite delays, and through an extensive discussion with the Project Developer, the WASC determined that the anticipated benefits and shovel-readiness of the project justified the approval of increased funding for the PMR.

LSGR WASC Co-Chair Mueller highlighted that a review of anticipated construction costs for upcoming projects emphasized the importance of encouraging applicants to explore public-private partnerships and leverage municipal funding sources. For FY 2025-26, the WASC allocated 88% of available funding and remains focused on advancing projects through diversified funding strategies.

### **iv. Santa Clara River Watershed Area**

Santa Clara River (SCR) WASC Chair Darin Seegmiller reported that the WASC comprises a diverse mix of perspectives and partnerships. Opportunities were identified for infiltration projects and support for MS4 compliance, along with efforts to address invasive species within the watershed. The WASC received one application for the Data-Driven Resource Optimization and Planning System (DROPS) for Los Angeles County Scientific Study, which was discussed during SIP deliberation. SCR WASC Chair Seegmiller shared that the WASC emphasized the importance of funding Scientific Studies that provide unique contributions and avoid duplication of existing efforts.

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The ROC proceeded with a discussion on the four proposed SIPs presented. Member Mehranian recused from the discussion about Central Santa Monica Bay discussion due to a conflict of interest.

Member Gold recommended that presentations to the ROC on proposed projects include a clear description of anticipated outcomes related to Water Quality, Water Supply, and Community Investment Benefits. Member Gold requested that summary tables outline who is conducting research for the proposed Scientific Studies. Member Gold also expressed interest in being more involved in the scientific review process.

Upon inquiry, Public Works staff provided an overview of the Scientific Studies review process, explaining that an independent third-party consultant currently conducts the initial reviews. Staff also noted that a symposium and advisory panel on Scientific Studies is in development.

Member Mehranian raised concerns about how project costs are calculated, particularly the estimation of cost escalation between the time of approval and actual construction. The Committee discussed the need to account for operations and maintenance (O&M) costs and ensuring long-term project maintenance. Additional comments emphasized the need for greater transparency in modeling Water Supply and Water Quality Benefits. Chair Faustinos suggested communicating cumulative impacts across SIPs from multiple FYs.

Member Barbara Romero asked how significant modifications to project benefits are defined within PMR Guidelines and recommended a consistent framework be created to support future decision-making. Member Romero additionally suggested conducting an analysis of PMRs that requested additional funding to identify recurring trends or patterns. The Committee suggested that these collective concerns and observations be flagged for inclusion in Biennial Progress Report recommendations.

Upon inquiry, Public Works staff clarified that the figures capturing anticipated benefits in the proposed SIPs reflect cumulative benefits of both new and continuing projects. Public Works staff noted that improvements are underway in how Water Quality and Water Supply Benefits are reported.

Member Diana Mahmud raised concerns about Table 7-1 in the SIP Transmittals, which categorize project status as “continuing” and “completed.” Member Mahmud recommended that project status be broken out by planning, design, and construction phases. Member Mahmud additionally expressed concerns regarding SIP tool projections, particularly the need to separate out O&M costs for better transparency. Member Mahmud posed whether the program should prioritize funding O&M through the SCW Program or if it should be supported by municipal contributions.

Upon request, Public Works staff clarified that Figure 4.1 in the SIP Transmittal documents features a hypothetical scenario for anticipated projection of all construction and O&M costs. Member Mahmud suggested policy guidance for WASCs to help evaluate future funding requests, potential funding shortfalls, and proactively communicate leveraged funding requirements to Project Developers.

Member Carl Blum expressed concern that the SCW Program remains reactive rather than proactive and emphasized that the primary goal should be to build high value projects. Member Blum commented that Scientific Studies need stronger coordination and underlined the importance of the SCW Program in funding O&M costs and recommended that Project Developers be required to provide O&M cost estimates.

Member Norma Camacho echoed concerns about the reactive nature of the SCW Program process and expressed hope that Watershed Planning will play a more directive role in identifying watershed needs. Member Camacho commented that projects are going over budget and Project Developers should address who is responsible for contingency funding. Member Camacho recommended that a risk assessment component be incorporated into the Project Application process to account for uncertainties.

### **7. Voting Items:**

#### **a. Recommendations for Fiscal Year 2025-26 Stormwater Investment Plans**

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Member Mehranian motioned to recommend that Lower Los Angeles River, Lower San Gabriel River, and Santa Clara River Watershed Areas FY 2025-26 Stormwater Investment Plans are helping achieve SCW Program Goals, and therefore be recommended for approval by the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors. The motion was seconded by Member Kristine Guerrero with 7 votes in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstention, and 2 absent at the time of the vote (approved, see vote tracking sheet).

Member Guerrero motioned to recommend that the Central Santa Monica Bay Watershed Area Fiscal Year 2025-26 Stormwater Investment Plan is helping to achieve SCW Program goals, and therefore be recommended for approval by the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors. The motion was seconded by Member Romero with 6 votes in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstention, 2 absent at the time of the vote, and 1 recusal (approved, see vote tracking sheet). Member Mehranian recused herself from the Central Santa Monica Bay SIP vote due to a conflict of interest.

### **8. Update on Adaptive Management Board Motion Items**

Public Works staff provided an update on the 15 key directives from the March 19, 2024 Adaptive Management Board Motion Items. Presentation slides can be found on the [SCW Program website](#).

Upon inquiry, Public Works explained that the metrics presented on the Project Dashboard are provided by Project Developers.

Upon inquiry regarding Motion Directive #5, Public Works staff confirmed that Revised Regional Program Transfer Agreements for IP projects are anticipated to be approved by the Board in Fall 2026. This timeline aligns with the FY 2026-27 Call for Projects timeline, when next year's recommended SIPs will become available for Board action in Fall 2026. It was also clarified that while there are amendments planned for IPs this year through PMRs, there are no new Transfer Agreements for IPs since no IP applications were received for the FY2025-26 Call for Projects cycle.

Regarding Motion Directive #9, Public Works staff clarified that the Community Strengths and Needs Assessment (CSNA) Dashboard is available for Project Developers to reference in support of community engagement and project development.

Member Mahmud raised concern about lengthy Transfer Agreement timelines. Public Works staff noted that Regional Program Transfer Agreement template materials are available and Project Developers should understand what is required to avoid delays.

Member Mehranian requested more information about the Water Quality Scoring Pilot and asked how Adaptive Management would be reflected in current processes. Public Works noted that many Adaptive Management elements are evolving and some will be incorporated into the Watershed Plans.

Member Gold highlighted challenges in implementing school-based projects and the need for greater outreach and education. Member Gold also called for clearer post-construction monitoring guidance to evaluate stormwater infiltration impacts on groundwater quality.

The Committee discussed the timelines between the release schedule of Watershed Plans and the upcoming FY2026-27 Call for Projects deadline on July 31, 2025. Committee Members expressed concern about the missed opportunity to better craft projects by aligning with the Watershed Area needs identified in Watershed Plans and prior to the formation of a Scientific Studies Advisory Committee. Public Works staff shared that the Watershed Planning timeline was extended to directly address earlier ROC feedback to include more engagement in the development process. Chair Faustinos requested Public Works provide an analysis at the next ROC meeting on whether a four-to-five-month extension in the Call for Projects deadline is possible.

Chair Faustinos requested that a compilation of related resources and links to pertinent background information be provided to the ROC for future meetings.



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Chair Faustinos cautioned against over-relying on current CSNA Dashboard data given the smaller sample sizes and emphasized the availability of scientifically sound data sources, including various GIS tools, to support the identification of Community Investment Benefits.

Chair Faustinos also requested more information on how the TRP Program is prioritizing partnerships with community-based organizations and requested a status update on the K-12 Education Program.

### 9. ROC Member Updates

Member Blum asked how the upcoming LA County Water Resilience Summit ties into SCW Program topics discussed during this meeting. Public Works shared that the event is closely related and Task Force updates, particularly from the Nature-Based Solutions Blue Ribbon Panel, will help clarify and further build on the integration.

Upon inquiry, Public Works staff clarified that any potential tax revenue reductions resulting from the credit trading program would be applied at a watershed scale.

### 10. Program Administration Update

Public Works staff provided updates, noting:

- Community needs identified through the CSNA, along with other tools, are available to Project Applicant to help ensure a comprehensive application. The Water Quality Scoring Pilot now includes a graduated scoring system that allows partial points. This is the first Call for Projects combining both Water Quality and Water Supply Scoring Pilots.
- Phase three of Watershed Planning engagement with WASCs is nearly complete, with a public review opportunity expected in late summer.
- The Watershed Coordinator re-selection process is underway at WASCs, with some selections completed and others scheduled for June and July.
- The Credit Trading Program procedures were finalized last year and applications are due in September. Credits will apply to tax revenue starting May 1, 2026.
- Nearly 300 tax relief applications have been received for low-income seniors and general income reductions, with new forms to be released this fall. The 2025 fires are not anticipated to have an Don SCW Program tax assessments.
- Municipal disbursements have been made to 65 of 85 cities, with ongoing outreach to the remaining cities. A workshop on the Municipal Metrics and Measures section of the Reporting Module was held in May, in alignment with Watershed Planning. Municipal Annual Plans are under review, and audits are expected to be completed and summarized soon.
- The 2025 Biennial Progress Report (BPR25) Working Group has begun meeting monthly to review recommendations, including input from WASCs Chairs, Watershed Coordinators, and the public. Development of the BPR25 will begin this summer and there is an anticipated 30-day public comment period in October. The Regional Coordination team prepared a [summary memo of Watershed Coordinator feedback](#), which was provided for the ROC's review.

### 11. Items for Next Agenda / 6-Month Look Ahead

Public Works shared a look ahead of 2025 ROC meetings which can be found on the [SCW Program website](#). The July 9 meeting will focus on reviewing and making recommendations to the Board for approving the remaining FY 2025–26 SIPs, as well as electing the ROC Chair and Vice-Chair, or Co-Chairs.

### 12. Meeting Adjourned

Chair Faustinos thanked ROC Members and the public and adjourned the meeting at 4:06 PM.