



Scoring Committee Memo

To: Safe, Clean Water Program
Scoring Committee

From: Safe, Clean Water Program
Regional Coordination Team

Date: April 23, 2026

Reference: Scoring Committee Comments and Recommendations – Round 7 Projects

Purpose and Background

At the December 15, 2025 Scoring Committee (Committee) meeting, Committee Members requested that the Regional Coordination team summarize the observations and recommendations made by the Committee about the Safe, Clean Water (SCW) Program Scoring Criteria during the evaluation of Round 7 Regional Program Infrastructure Program Projects (Fiscal Year 2026-27 Call for Projects).

Scoring Committee Recommendation #1: Implement Separate Applications for Infrastructure Program Projects That Request Operations & Maintenance-Only Funding

In prior rounds of scoring, the Committee recommended phase-specific applications for the three types of Infrastructure Program Project submittals: Design, Construction, and Operations & Maintenance (O&M). This year, Round 7 Call for Projects Scoring was updated to include two application types: Design-Only and Design/Construction/O&M, with separate requirements outlined in the [Supplemental Guidance to Support Feasibility Study Guidelines](#), depending on project phase. The Committee expressed positive feedback for the separation of these two applications, and recommended the application be further refined to separate O&M-only funding requests as a distinct application type.

The Committee reflected that projects currently returning for O&M-only funding have previously been reviewed by the Scoring Committee for Design/Construction funding and thus received a score above the threshold to be considered by the Watershed Area Steering Committee and funded by the SCW Regional Program. The Committee recommended a more streamlined application for O&M-Only Applicants that have previously received funding through the SCW Program for prior project phases, and the ability to track and reference projects' previous scoring rubrics.

A recommendation was presented to, and well received, by the Committee to classify O&M Applications into two categories, with separate processes. O&M-Only application categories would be defined as either:

- 1) Projects that were previously awarded SCW Program construction funding and are returning with a SCW Regional Program O&M funding request, or
- 2) Projects whose construction was funded outside of the SCW Regional Program, but are requesting SCW Regional Program O&M funding.

Projects that have previously received SCW Program construction funding and are returning for O&M funding will apply through a streamlined process with previous Final Scores from the Scoring Committee carried over and verified by the Scoring Committee for up to five years of O&M funding. After the fifth year, a new O&M-Only application will need to be submitted through the same streamlined process.

Projects that have not previously received SCW Program construction funding, meaning that project construction was funded outside of the SCW Program, and are requesting SCW Program O&M funding will need to undergo scoring by the Committee. The scoring of these projects will be evaluated through the same Scoring Criteria as other Infrastructure Program Project applications. However, previous construction funding

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can be applied towards the Leveraged Funding portion of Scoring Criteria, but capital costs must remain based on cost-effectiveness scoring.

Scoring Committee Recommendation #2: Evaluate Water Quality Scoring Adaptation Pilot

In Round 7, Project Applicants had the option to select the Water Supply Scoring Adaptation Pilot, developed through findings from the Metrics and Monitoring Study (MMS). The Water Quality Scoring Pilot aimed to improve alignment with pollutant reduction goals for a diverse range of projects. The Water Quality Scoring Pilot introduced one-point gradation into the existing scoring structure, allowing more nuanced evaluation of project benefits, and offers Project Applicants the option to use 85th percentile storm runoff capture volume instead of 24-hour capacity for water quality cost-effectiveness calculations.

Many projects elected to use this newly introduced scoring pilot with 19 out of 29 submitted Infrastructure Program Project applications utilizing the Water Quality Scoring Adaptation Pilot. The Committee additionally elected to score two submitted projects using the Water Quality Scoring Adaptation Pilot, even though the Project Applicant did not initially use the pilot, increasing the total to 21 out of the 29 submitted Infrastructure Program Projects scored using the Water Quality Scoring Adaptation Pilot.

The Committee expressed interest in reviewing the evaluation of how the pilot impacted the Program.

Scoring Committee Recommendation #3: Clarify Eligible Claims for Water Quality Benefits

Revise Projects Module to More Accurately Represent Projects with Multiple BMPs with Treat-and-Release BMPs

The Committee acknowledged limitations of the SCW Program Projects Module in accurately representing complex projects with multiple Best Management Practices (BMPs) with Treat-and-Release BMPs. The Committee noted that the Projects Module automatically assumes that projects with multiple treatment modes, like treat-and-release BMPs, include infiltration, which can lead to a miscalculation in the true reduction of pollutants. To address this miscalculation, the Committee suggested that treat-and-release BMPs be given a reduction factor, based on monitoring or vendor data. The Committee additionally requested that the Projects Module be improved to better equip Project Applicants with carrying out complex calculations for projects with multiple BMPs with Treat-and-Release BMPs within the Projects Module. This improvement would also help Project Applicants with fewer resources by offering support in carrying out complex calculations.

“Wet Weather” and “Dry Weather” Designations

The Committee additionally discussed the distinction between “wet weather” and “dry weather” projects. In Round 7, some projects with large drainage areas continued to be designated as “dry weather” projects if they could not treat the 85th percentile storm needed to be classified as a “wet weather” project. The Committee noted political implications behind the meanings of “wet weather” versus “dry weather” projects, and re-designating project types is for scoring purposes only.

Scoring Committee Recommendation #4: Clarify Eligible Claims for Water Supply Benefits

Net Countable Supply Ratios

The MMS developed adjustment factors that can be used to prorate the increase in locally available water supply by a Project if it is located upstream from an existing runoff capture facility. In Round 7, net countable supply ratios were introduced into the Projects Module to prorate the volume of runoff capture and better estimate net new locally available water supply. The Committee noted overall success in implementing net countable supply ratios. However, for the next Call for Projects, the Committee suggested that Project

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Applicants incorporate a ratio to reflect Water Supply Benefits claimed in the Central Santa Monica Bay and South Santa Monica Bay Watershed Areas after completing engagement with the Santa Monica Groundwater Management Authority to establish an understanding of how the Santa Monica Groundwater Management Authority tracks and affirms intentional recharge operations.

In Round 7, 5 out of 29 did not apply Net Countable Supply ratios, as indicated in the Supplemental Guidance to Support Feasibility Study Guidelines, or applied the incorrect ratio and needed to be rescored by the Committee following a request and submission of additional information. The Committee recommended Net Countable Supply ratio automatically be applied, and/or more guidance be provided in the Projects Module and integrated into the Watershed Planning and Spatial Data Library tools.

Cost Effectiveness Ratios

Similar to previous years, the Committee noted that the use of a cost effectiveness ratio is misleading, because when calculating the Water Supply Benefit against the entire project cost, very high dollar-to-benefit comparisons are made. The Committee also noted that cost effectiveness ratios are even lower this year due to cost escalations, and revisions should be made to the Scoring Criteria. The cost effectiveness ratio makes it difficult to evaluate multi-benefit projects and determine the exact allocation of cost that produces Water Supply Benefits. The Committee suggested pivoting towards a full project cost accounting, which includes line-item costs associated with each project benefit. This approach would aid in better evaluating cost effectiveness.

Diversion to Sanitary Sewer

In Round 7, the Committee continued to request that all Water Supply Benefit claims be verified with a letter from the appropriate Watermaster or agency overseeing the reclamation of diverted stormwater (e.g., Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts). The Committee continued discussing the appropriateness of claiming Water Supply Benefits gained through sanitary sewer diversions to future advanced water treatment facilities, as the ability for diverted stormwater to be fully used for reclamation remains speculative. The Committee continued to discuss the importance of better understanding how much new water is generated through the SCW Program.

To address the difficulty in claiming Water Supply Benefit points, the Committee previously recommended either changing the SCW Program ordinance definition of Water Supply Benefit to include activities that infiltrate water with the intent to replenish groundwater or adjusting the Scoring Criteria to include specific thresholds for each Watershed Area, creating a “base plus bonus” system of scoring, and/or assigning weights to different scoring sections.

Scoring Committee Recommendation #5: Revise Scoring Criteria for Community Investment Benefits

In Round 7, 3 out of 29 projects did not meet the 60-point threshold score to be eligible for WASC consideration in the Stormwater Investment Plans (SIPs). The Committee recommended that the Scoring Criteria be revised to award points for Community Investment Benefits (CIBs) on a quantifiable, scaled metrics basis, rather than a simple pass/fail structure. The Committee recommended a CIB Scoring Adaptation Pilot be launched, similar to the Water Quality and Water Supply Scoring Adaptation Pilots, which have allowed Project Applicants to receive points for incremental or small-scale benefits.

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Scoring Committee Recommendation #6: Revise Scoring Criteria for Nature-Based Solutions – Removal of Impervious Area from Project

In previous years, the Committee provided recommendations on adjusting impervious surface area calculations for scoring a component of Nature-Based Solutions. Committee recommendations to address the scoring for removal of impervious area include:

1. Modify the Project Module to require that Project Applicants submit additional information documenting the impermeable surface removed in relation to the total project area.
2. Consider adjusting the Scoring Criteria for impermeable area removed from a percentage to the total impermeable area removed in acres.

Scoring Committee Recommendation #7: Strengthen Requirements to Demonstrate Local Support

The Committee suggested establishing additional minimum requirements to further demonstrate local community-based support of projects. The Committee discussed the importance of requiring that itemized budgets include line items for community engagement and suggested that a minimum eligibility threshold be added requiring that projects have conducted community engagement.

Similar to previous years, the Committee reemphasized the importance of quantifiable metrics, (e.g., the number of community members contacted, community demographics, demonstration of represented population engaged from the neighborhood, and demonstration by Project Applicants of strong local support), and considered whether the SCW Program should automatically award points if a Project formally partners with a community-based organization.

The Committee additionally discussed that engagement should be a requirement for all project types, including Technical Resources Program (TRP) Project Concepts and projects receiving O&M-only funding.

Other Items

The following comments reflect other items raised by Committee Members:

Watershed Planning

SCW Program Watershed Planning efforts have been ongoing through Round 7. At the time of the Round 7 Call for Projects deadline in July 2025, Draft Initial Watershed Plans and Watershed Planning Tools were not yet available. For Round 7, the Committee deferred to the WASCs to discuss Watershed Planning alignment (as applicable) during SIP deliberations following the scoring of projects, since these draft plans and tools were publicly available at the time of SIP deliberations.

The Committee also discussed an instance in which a proposed project had overlapping dry weather flow benefits with an existing, currently funded SCW Program Project. The Committee recommended that Project Applicants utilize the Watershed Planning Tool, which allows users to see how proposed projects would interact with currently funded SCW Program Projects.

Leverage Funding

Similar to previous years, the Committee frequently recommended that projects pursue funding from other sources such as County Measure A and M funds. The Committee also requested more guidance on whether leveraged funds for construction costs should count towards the points awarded for leveraged funds in a SCW Program O&M-Only application.