

Central Santa Monica Bay Watershed Area Steering Committee (WASC) Meeting Minutes



Tuesday, May 5, 2026
1:00pm – 3:00pm
Culver City Hall – Patacchia Conference Room
9770 Culver Blvd, Culver City, CA 90232
WebEx Meeting

Committee Members Present:

*CJ Caluag, Los Angeles County Flood Control District (Agency)
Susie Santilena, Los Angeles City Sanitation and Environment (Agency), Co-Chair
*Darryl Ford, Los Angeles City Recreation and Parks (Agency)
Ion Cretu, PSOMAS (Community)
*Tanya Borja, SCOPE (Community)
*Maggie Gardner, Los Angeles Waterkeeper (Community)
Zoe Cunliffe, Black Women for Wellness (Community)
Josette Descalzo, Beverly Hills/West Hollywood (Municipal)
*Javier De La Cruz, Culver City (Municipal)
Roberto Perez, Los Angeles (Municipal)
Mara Luevano, Los Angeles (Municipal)
Geremew Amenu, Los Angeles County (Municipal)
Joshua Carvalho, Santa Monica/Inglewood (Municipal)
Stephanie Gebhardt Rath, Heal the Bay (Watershed Coordinator, non-voting member)
Vanessa Martinez, S. Groner Associates (Watershed Coordinator, non-voting member)

Committee Members Attending Virtually

*Augustine Han, West Basin Municipal Water District (Agency)
Art Castro, Los Angeles City Water & Power (Agency)

Committee Members Absent

Rita Kampalath, Los Angeles County Chief Sustainability Office (Community)
Rafael Prieto, Los Angeles (Municipal)

*Committee Member Alternate

See attached sign-in sheet for full list of attendees.

1) Welcome and Introductions

Chair Susie Santilena welcomed Committee Members and called the meeting to order. Los Angeles County Public Works (Public Works) staff facilitated the roll call of Committee Members. A quorum was established.

Members Art Castro and Augustine Han attended online and provided just cause.

2) Approval of Meeting Minutes from April 7, 2026

Member Darryl Ford motioned to approve the meeting minutes from April 7, 2026. Member Josette Descalzo seconded the motion. The Committee voted to approve the April 7, 2026 minutes with 10 votes in favor, 5 votes in abstention, and no votes in opposition (approved, see vote tracking sheet attached).

3) Committee Member & Program Updates

Public Works shared Regional Program updates, noting:

- The Regional Oversight Committee (ROC) voted to approve the 2026 Biennial Progress Report for submission to the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors (Board) on March 8, 2026. The 2026

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Biennial Progress Report is available on the Safe, Clean Water ([SCW](#)) [Program website](#) under Adaptive Management.

- As of May 5, 2026, eight WASCs have recommended a Fiscal Year 2026-2027 (FY26-27) Stormwater Investment Plan (SIP). The Rio Hondo (RH) WASC is the one remaining.
- Safe, Clean Water (SCW) Program staff will prepare the SIP Transmittal Reports for the ROC on behalf of the WASCs. This year, the SIP Transmittal Report is being updated based on prior feedback and will begin incorporating the released Initial Watershed Plans.
- The ROC is scheduled to discuss the recommended FY26-27 SIPs on June 10 and July 8, 2026. CSMB is tentatively scheduled for the June 10 ROC Meeting.
- On March 12, 2026, SCW Program staff reminded Regional Program Project Developers to submit 12-month lapsed funding extension requests per the conditions of the Regional Program Transfer Agreement. Only IP Projects who were disbursed funds during FY20-21 have the potential to lapse funds. If a Project had not expended funds equal to that year's disbursement as of the FY24-25 Annual Report, they were sent the reminder email. Four extension requests were received by the March 31 deadline. Public Works staff reviewed the requests and provided notifications that 12-months was granted at the end of April.
- The recording of the November 2025 Science Symposium has been posted on the [Science Symposium event webpage](#). The next Symposium is anticipated to be held in April 2027.
- All twelve Watershed Coordinator contracts are now fully executed. The contracts will end on December 31, 2026, with the option to renew for up to four one-year terms and six month-to-month extensions, for a maximum total contract term of five years and six months.
- The Quarter 4 (Q4) 2026 Funding Report has been posted to the [SCW Program website](#) under the Resources tab.
- The SCW Program Municipal Program Team is now offering project support services to all cities that have an updated City Services Contract with Los Angeles County Public Works. At this time, these services only include initial project planning and project design. Cities interested in utilizing these services or seek clarification, please contact the SCW Municipal Program email address: SCWPMunicipal@pw.lacounty.gov.

4) Watershed Coordinator Updates

Watershed Coordinators Stephanie Gebhardt Rath and Vanessa Martinez provided updates. Presentation slides are available on the [SCW Program website](#).

Key highlights included ongoing outreach efforts, such as tabling at multiple Earth Day events, hosting seven school lectures, and attending the Culver City Envirofest and the BeachLife Festival. Antos shared that 300 survey responses have been received across the region.

5) Ex Parte Communication Disclosure

There were no ex parte communication.

6) Presentations and Discussion Items

a) Key Areas of Interest for 2026 Call for Projects

Mike Antos (Stantec, Regional Coordination) presented on the Round 8 (FY27-28) Call for Projects WASC Priorities. Presentation slides can be found on the [SCW Program website](#).

Antos explained that identifying the WASC priorities can help guide potential Project Developers and help streamline evaluation. Antos noted that this effort builds on the work of the Strategic Advancement Section, formerly the Watershed Planning Section. Public Work's Strategic Advancement staff provided an overview of the new requirement for Infrastructure Program Project applications, which requires Project applicants to

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demonstrate clear alignment with the Initial Watershed Plans. Future applications will utilize the Initial Watershed Plan to strengthen the link between planning and implementation. Strategic Advancement staff gave a brief overview of the Application Module and the new Watershed Planning Alignment section, that allows Project applicants to describe how project design features align with the Initial Watershed Plans and SCW Program goals.

Additionally, staff defined some of the key terminology that is being used to track progress towards the watershed planning targets, such as 2025 Total Benefits, 2025 Constructed Baseline, and Anticipated Benefits (for Constructed and Planned Projects). Staff used this terminology to review a few of the Indicators being tracked in the CSMB Watershed Area, including Zinc Load Reduction and Increase Local Supply Through Stormwater Capture. Staff shared that the 2025 Constructed Baseline represents the benefits from constructed projects, however, those benefits have not yet been confirmed through monitoring. Public Works staff explained the differences between Anticipated Benefits for Constructed and Planned Projects, noting that the benefits are considered dynamic and will be periodically updated as new projects data is added in the Reporting Module. Upon inquiry, staff confirmed that projects that are returning for additional funding will not be double counted, and projects currently classified as “under consideration” are those not yet included in a SIP.

Upon inquiry, staff clarified that the Total Phosphorus Load Reduction Indicator is shown as ‘N/A’ in the Watershed Planning Tool for the CSMB Watershed Area since it is not recognized as a limiting pollutant in any of the Watershed Management Program’s for the Watershed Area.

Member Gardner asked about tracking operations and maintenance (O&M), noting that O&M is an increasing share of funding. Staff explained that post-construction monitoring and O&M guidance is currently under development.

Antos confirmed that the “Under Consideration” designation in the Watershed Planning Tool sums the benefits of the projects recommended in the SIP, but have not yet been approved for funding. Once the SIP is approved, the benefits designation will shift to “Anticipated Benefits.”

Strategic Advancement staff also clarified that the proposed benefits from Technical Resource Program (TRP) Projects are not included in the Watershed Planning Tool target bar graphs.

Antos observed that the WASC’s progress appears on track for the 2032 zinc target, but the 2038 and 2045 targets will require additional effort. Antos reminded the WASC that these metrics are indicators of progress, not the only items that can or should be addressed by projects.

The WASC discussed whether the indicators adequately reflect progress and remaining gaps. Member Descalzo highlighted the constraints of a highly built-out watershed, noting limited space may restrict the ability to meet water quality goals.

Member Descalzo questioned the source of water supply estimates, given limited groundwater recharge capacity in the region. Staff explained that targets for increasing drought preparedness are based on both top-down and bottom-up analysis, which includes information from existing planning efforts such as the County Water Plan, and account for watershed characteristics such as available unconfined aquifers and decentralized infiltration potential.

Public Works staff shared that 41 Regional Projects and Programs have been funded in CSMB, including 21 Infrastructure Program (IP) Projects, nine TRP Projects and two Watershed Coordinators, and ten Scientific Studies (SS).

Chair Santilena noted that while most of the Watershed Area falls within the City of Los Angeles, funding has been distributed across multiple cities. Antos emphasized that benefits should be distributed proportionally across municipalities and asked whether there is a preference for more municipal or non-municipal applicants.

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Chair Santilena expressed interest in more Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD)-led projects, particularly ones that include off-site capture and school greening efforts. Antos added that water quality and community greening benefits can be regional in nature, with schools serving as key community assets.

Member Descalzo highlighted the value of public-private partnerships to strengthen applications and bridge capacity gaps. The WASC also discussed the challenges of quantifying how benefits are distributed geographically, particularly for projects led by institutions where benefits may extend beyond the project owner's jurisdiction. Member Descalzo recommended Public Works support in reporting project benefits to the municipalities in which the project is located. The WASC acknowledged that non-municipal applicants face barriers, including complex and time-intensive application processes. The Watershed Coordinators noted playing an important role in helping navigate regulatory and permitting requirements.

Member Gardner observed strong diversity in applicants, especially through the TRP process and expressed interest in seeing more of these projects transition into IP Projects. Member Gardner expressed interest in schools partnering with non-profits or municipalities to bring forth projects. Upon inquiry by Member Roberto Perez, Antos clarified that spatial analysis of opportunity areas for each indicator is available online through the [Watershed Planning Tool](#). Antos added that delivering capital projects is complex and emphasized the value of hybrid models that pair municipalities with nonprofits or community-based organization partners, noting that participation of community partners is critical for community alignment. Member Zoe Cunliffe mentioned that while partnerships are encouraged, they are not strongly required or embedded in the SCW Program. Member Cunliffe suggested that projects claiming Disadvantaged Community Benefits should demonstrate meaningful community engagement, and that proposals with strong partnerships should be prioritized over those without. Antos emphasized the value of partnerships for strengthening engagement and relationships, noting that the WASC can help signal preferred project types and guide future Project applicants.

The WASC discussed the need to distinguish between formal partnerships and municipal-led projects, with efficacy often depending on the specific agreements between partners. Member Geremew Amenu supported partnerships but noted that nonprofits may be better suited to early phases, while municipalities are typically needed for construction and long-term O&M. Chair Santilena added that implementation is already challenging, and partnerships may place additional burden on smaller community groups due to liability. Member Gardner noted varied definitions of successful partnerships but encouraged continued collaboration across entities.

The WASC expressed interest in projects that create new open space. Member Ford emphasized that even small, distributed open spaces can provide community benefits and should be intentionally designed, funded, and maintained. Watershed Coordinator Gebhardt Rath added that community-identified opportunities for open space have been contributed to the Community Strengths and Needs Assessment (CSNA) Dashboard.

Antos noted that current CSMB SIPs show approximately 57% leveraged funding. The WASC discussed whether to formalize a minimum leveraged funding target, as was done in the Lower San Gabriel River (LSGR) WASC.

The WASC discussed limited near-term funding capacity, revisiting the 80% allocation target and the possibility of reclaiming unused funds from delayed projects. Antos referenced lapsed funding guidelines and their relationship with Transfer Agreements.

Member Gardner suggested encouraging a 50% leveraged funding baseline, consistent with current averages, while still allowing flexibility. Member Amenu noted leveraged funding expectations may need to be evaluated annually, given funding variability.

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The WASC discussed potential gaps in investment and acknowledged that many past projects focused on existing parks and open space, noting that future opportunities may require more distributed Best Management Practices (BMPs) as available sites diminish. Chair Santilena noted prior investments that focused on coastal compliance, although gaps remain in areas east of Ballona Creek. Chair Santilena added that the CSMB Watershed Area has strong dry weather coverage, but there is a need for more wet weather projects. WASC Members identified stormwater capture as a proxy for pollution reduction.

Watershed Coordinator Gebhardt Rath highlighted CSNA-identified priorities related to climate resilience, safety, and open space. Member Gardner shared opportunities for new open space and depaving, noting that removing paved areas is a BMP with multiple benefits including runoff reduction, infiltration potential, and urban heat island mitigation benefits.

The WASC discussed potential Scientific Studies that could benefit the CSMB Watershed Area, including updated pollutant loading ("Event Mean Concentrations", or EMCs) information to better guide project design and prioritization. Antos added that the Scientific Study Advisory Panel is anticipated to help guide these efforts through a regional lens.

The WASC expressed appreciation for the SIP deliberation tools and provided positive feedback on comparison matrices. WASC Members suggested shorter one-to-two-page summaries to further condense information. Watershed Coordinator Gebhardt Rath also expressed the need for data validation to ensure the Application Module presents accurate information.

7) Public Comment Period

There were no public comments.

8) Voting Items

There were no voting items.

9) Items for Future Agenda

- a) Strategic/Outreach and Engagement Plan (SOEP)
- b) FY25-26 Regional Program Mid-Year Report Summary

10) Adjournment

Chair Santilena thanked the Committee Members and the public for their participation and adjourned the meeting. The next CSMB WASC meeting is tentatively scheduled for June 2, 2026. See the [SCW Program website](#) for more information.

CENTRAL SANTA MONICA BAY WASC MEETING - May 5, 2026

		Quorum Present				Voting Items
Member Type	Organization	Primary Member	Attendance: In-person ("x" for present)	Alternate Member	Attendance: In-person ("x" for present)	Vote to approve April 7, 2026 Meeting Minutes
Agency	Los Angeles County Flood Control District	Daniel Bradbury		CJ Caluag	x	a
Agency	West Basin Municipal Water District	Matthew Veeh		Augustine Han	x	a
Agency	Los Angeles City Water & Power	Art Castro	x	Conor Mossavi		a
Agency	Los Angeles City Sanitation and Environment	<u>Susie Santilena</u>	x	Hubertus Cox		y
Agency	Los Angeles City Recreation & Parks	Cathie Santo Domingo		Darryl Ford	x	y
Community Stakeholder	Los Angeles County Chief Sustainability Office	Rita Kampalath		Rebecca Ferdman		
Community Stakeholder	PSOMAS / Business Sector	Ion Cretu	x	Andrew Nickerson		a
Community Stakeholder	SCOPE	Gloria Medina		Tanya Borja	x	y
Community Stakeholder	Los Angeles Waterkeeper	Bruce Reznik		Maggie Gardner	x	a
Community Stakeholder	Black Women for Wellness	Zoe Cunliffe	x	Tianna Shaw-Wakeman		y
Municipal Members	Beverly Hills / West Hollywood	Josette Descalzo	x	Matthew Magener		y
Municipal Members	Culver City	Sean Singletary		Javier De La Cruz	x	y
Municipal Members	Los Angeles	Roberto Perez	x			y
Municipal Members	Los Angeles	Rafael Prieto		Blayne Sutton-Wills		
Municipal Members	Los Angeles	Mara Luevano	x	Virginia Wei		y
Municipal Members	Los Angeles County	Geremew Amenu	x	Lara Awad		y
Municipal Members	Santa Monica / Inglewood	Joshua Carvalho	x	Anna Groehnert		y
Watershed Coordinator	Heal the Bay	Stephanie Gebhardt Rath	x	Alexia Skrbic		
Watershed Coordinator	SGA Marketing	Vanessa Martinez	x	Angelica Garcia		
Total Non-Vacant Seats		17			Yay (Y)	10
Total Voting Members Present		15			Nay (N)	0
Agency		5			Abstain (A)	5
Community Stakeholder		4			Total	15
Municipal Members		6				Approved

Attendees
Central Santa Monica Bay WASC Meeting
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Alexia Skrbic	Grey Crisanto - LACPW	Mike Antos (Regional Coord)
Angineh Shahnazarian	Josafat Flores	Omar Abdelhadi
Aric Martinez	Kristina Moreno	Pablo Forni - LACPW
Armando Nunez-Fausto	Lara Awad	Patacchia Conference Room
Art Castro	Larry Tran - LACPW	Pearl Azizian
Augustine Han West Basin	Linet Khechatoorian	Ryanna Fossum
Christoper Vong	Luis Perez (SWPD)	Tim Brown (Herrera)
Craig Doberstein	Marisol Ibarra	Uriel Cobian
Emily Huang (Stantec)	Mark Nguyen	Wendy Dinh
Felicia Yin	Michael Ku	

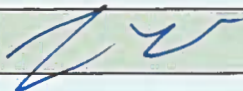
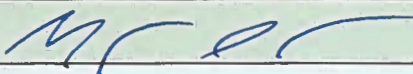
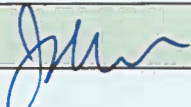
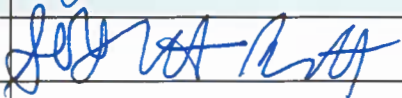
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COMMITTEE MEMBER AND ALTERNATE SIGN-IN: **May 5, 2026**



Member Type	Member Name	Municipality/ Organization	Role	Signature
Agency	Daniel Bradbury	Los Angeles County Flood Control District	P	
Agency	CJ Caluag	Los Angeles County Flood Control District	A	CJ Caluag
Agency	Matthew Veeh	West Basin Metropolitan Water District	P	
Agency	Augustine Han	West Basin Metropolitan Water District	A	
Agency	Art Castro	Los Angeles City Water & Power	P	
Agency	Conor Mossavi	Los Angeles City Water & Power	A	
Agency	Susie Santilena	Los Angeles City Sanitation and Environment	P	
Agency	Hubertus Cox	Los Angeles City Sanitation and Environment	A	
Agency	Cathie Santo Domingo	Los Angeles City Recreation & Parks	P	
Agency	Darryl Ford	Los Angeles City Recreation & Parks	A	Darryl Ford
Community Stakeholder	Rita Kampalath	Los Angeles County Chief Sustainability Office	P	
Community Stakeholder	Rebecca Ferdman	Los Angeles County Chief Sustainability Office	A	
Community Stakeholder	Ion Cretu	PSOMAS / Business Sector	P	Ion Cretu
Community Stakeholder	Andrew Nickerson	PSOMAS / Business Sector	A	
Community Stakeholder	Gloria Medina	SCOPE	P	
Community Stakeholder	Tanya Borja	SCOPE	A	Tanya Borja
Community Stakeholder	Bruce Reznik	Los Angeles Waterkeeper	P	
Community Stakeholder	Maggie Gardner	Los Angeles Waterkeeper	A	Maggie Gardner
Community Stakeholder	Zoe Cunliffe	Black Women for Wellness	P	
Community Stakeholder	Tianna Shaw-Wakeman	Black Women for Wellness	A	

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COMMITTEE MEMBER AND ALTERNATE SIGN-IN: **May 5, 2026**



Member Type	Member Name	Municipality/ Organization	Role	Signature
Municipal Member	Josette Descalzo	Beverly Hills	P	
Municipal Member	Matthew Magener	West Hollywood	A	
Municipal Member	Sean Singletary	Culver City	P	
Municipal Member	Javier De La Cruz	Culver City	A	
Municipal Member	Roberto Perez	Los Angeles	P	
Municipal Member	Rafael Prieto	Los Angeles	P	
Municipal Member	Blayne Sutton-Wells	Los Angeles	A	
Municipal Member	Mara Luevano	Los Angeles	P	
Municipal Member	Virginia Wei	Los Angeles	A	
Municipal Member	Geremew Amenu	Los Angeles County	P	
Municipal Member	Lara Awad	Los Angeles County	A	
Municipal Member	Joshua Carvalho	Santa Monica	P	
Municipal Member	Anna Groehnert	Inglewood	A	
Watershed Coordinator	Stephanie Gebhardt Rath	Heal the Bay	WC	
Watershed Coordinator	Alexia Skrbic	Heal the Bay	A	
Watershed Coordinator	Vanessa Martinez	SGA Marketing	WC	
Watershed Coordinator	Angelica Garcia	SGA Marketing	A	