

**MINUTES  
OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE  
SAN JOAQUIN RIVER EXCHANGE CONTRACTORS WATER AUTHORITY  
HELD FRIDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2024**

The Board of Directors of the *San Joaquin River Exchange Contractors Water Authority (SJRECWA)* met in Regular Session on Friday, December 13, 2024 in the Board Room of the *San Joaquin River Exchange Contractors Water Authority*, 541 “H” Street, City of Los Banos, County of Merced, State of California.

The following persons were present:

**REPRESENTATIVES:**

**Central California Irrigation District (CCID):** Jarrett Martin, Alternate Director/General Manager

**San Luis Canal Company (SLCC):** Cannon Michael, Director; John Wiersma, General Manager

**Firebaugh Canal Water District (FCWD):** Mike Stearns, Vice-Chair; Jeff Bryant, General Manager

**Columbia Canal Company (CCC):** Chris Cardella, Chair; Mike Gardner, General Manager

**STAFF MEMBERS:**

Chris White, Executive Director; Steve Chedester, Director of Policy & Programs; Joann White, Director of Finance and Administration; and Adam Hoffman, Water Resources Specialist

**PRESENT:**

Kimberly Brown, CCC Director; Andrew McClure, Minasian Law; and David Cory, Consultant

The following participated via Conference Call:

Rick Iger, Provost & Pritchard; Lauren Layne, Baker, Manock & Jensen; and Mitch Partovi, The Water Agency, Inc.

**CALL TO ORDER:**

Chair Cardella called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

**REVIEW OF AGENDA:**

There were no proposed changes to the agenda.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

The unapproved minutes from the November 1, 2024 Regular Board meeting were presented. A motion was made by Director Michael and seconded by Alternate Director Martin to approve the minutes as presented. The motion was unanimously approved.

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:**

Introductions were provided by those participating in person and via teleconference.

**BOARD TO APPROVE THE NOVEMBER 2024 EXPENDITURES AND FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT:**

Joann White provided a summary of the November 2024 Expenditure List and Financial Report.

Following her report, a motion was made by Vice-Chair Stearns and seconded by Director Michael to approve the Expenditure List and Financial Report as presented. The motion was unanimously approved.

**WATER REPORT:**

The Water Resources Specialist reported that Exchange Contractors' current demands are down to 85 cubic per second (cfs), with flows of 150 cfs. from the San Joaquin River Restoration Program (SJRRP) at Sack Dam. The SJRRP has scheduled a pulse flow of 240 cfs. in February.

Current storage at Shasta Dam is 2,784,334 acre feet (AF), noting that they had received 17" of rain since mid-November, and anticipate another 7" during the upcoming storm. As a reminder, he mentioned the new water year's target at Shasta for the Exchange Contractors is 3.2M AF.

The San Luis Reservoir is still gaining with current storage at 1,322,573 AF. There has been little precipitation at Millerton with current storage at 212,135 AF. Mr. Hoffman then reported that there was an issue at the Bill Jones Pumping Plant earlier this week where they had to reduce a pump, currently running four units. They anticipate being back up to five units next week.

Snowpack is at 150% of average based on snow pillow sensors; the first physical snow measurement will happen in January. The California Department of Water Resources (DWR) released their first WY forecast currently showing the 90% at 4.3M AF inflow into Shasta, noting it is still very early for the season.

Mr. Hoffman referred to the remainder of his report for the Board's information.

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT:**

Executive Director White reported on the two proposed legislation to raise the cap spending for the San Joaquin River Restoration Program. One proposed by Senator Padilla and the House companion bill by Congressman Costa. If they are not adopted under the Lame Duck session, they will be moved into next year's proposed legislation.

Manager Wiersma provided an update on the development of the operation's plan with the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation), noting that Reclamation has completed their 100% design at the Sack Dam project and commenced the contract bid process.

Manager Martin next reported on the Reach 2B project stating that they are ready to start moving dirt for the Poso Canal Crossing. Still attempting to work through progress without guaranteed funding, in addition to developing an operation's plan under the proposed project. It was acknowledged that Reclamation has been made aware several times that to have a successful restoration project, sufficient funding for all projects is necessary before moving forward.

The Executive Director recapped the current water operations in comparison to historical data. The Exchange Contractors continue to work with Central Valley Operations on early modeling. We are also putting together data in preparation of the upcoming Drought Pool Plan meeting scheduled for December 19<sup>th</sup>.

Regarding legislative issues, there are several new legislators as an outcome of the recent election and the Exchange Contractors will be scheduling visits to Sacramento and Washington DC during the first two months of 2025 to reach out to them and others. Tours are also being scheduled for this upcoming spring.

Executive Director White reported that San Luis Canal Company continues to work on their groundwater mitigation project and other discussions continue with neighboring districts regarding Sustainable Groundwater Management Act issues. He then explained that pursuant to Section 6.8 of the Water Transfer Policy, a board workshop will be scheduled in January to determine if any changes are needed.

**DIRECTOR OF POLICY & PROGRAMS REPORT:**

The Director of Policy & Programs reported that the bid package has been sent out on the Sack Dam Fish Passage project with a submittal due date of January 13<sup>th</sup>. Construction award is scheduled for 2025. Regarding the Mendota Pool Fish Screen and Control Structure, more than 250 comments were received on the 90% design. Responses are being addressed and should be circulated in January 2025. Once Reclamation completes its 90% design, both plans will be released together. The current schedule reflects the 100% design to be completed in October 2025.

Mr. Chedester also provided an update on activities involving the re-consultation on the Long-Term Operations (LTO) of the Central Valley Project (CVP) and State Water Project (SWP)

Draft Biological Assessment/Biological Opinion, in addition to the recent State Water Resources Control Board's (SWRCB) Healthy Rivers and Landscapes workshops, and the Water Blueprint for the San Joaquin Valley actions.

**WATER RESOURCES PLAN (WRP) – UPDATE:**

Steve Chedester said that the electrical panels for the Orestimba Creek project delivery has been pushed back into January. Following receipt, they will be able to install the pumping plant transformer, powerlines and motors. They have yet to receive a date from the SWRCB for the hearing to address two outstanding protests regarding the permanent water right petition.

Regarding the Los Banos Creek project, Mr. Chedester reported that they anticipate construction to begin next Fall, they received the final 401 permit certification in November, and the 404 permit is proceeding. Concluding, he said that the Operation's Agreement has been completed and they are coordinating with Reclamation.

Manager Martin added that CCID has signed a release with Vulcan Materials Company and is currently working on a draft agreement with another CCID landowner. Once that is completed, they will begin the CEQA process.

With regard to the Del Puerto Canyon Reservoir project, the Executive Director White said that the Technical Review Board (TRB) met with the project team in November and the project partners will be making a presentation to the Stanislaus County Board of Supervisors in January.

**BAY-DELTA WATER QUALITY AND REGIONAL WATER QUALITY CONTROL BOARD (RWOCB) REPORT:**

Consultant David Cory reviewed his report and covered other issues relating to salt management, salinity targets and retirement of the CV Salts Executive Director.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2024-05 – RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE WATER MANAGEMENT PLAN UPDATES OF THE SAN JOAQUIN RIVER EXCHANGE CONTRACTORS WATER AUTHORITY'S MEMBER ENTITIES, CCID, SLCC, FCWD, AND CCC:**

Following presentation of Resolution No. 2024-05, the Executive Director explained that the updated plan had been posted on the Exchange Contractors website for 30 days, and he is recommending approval of Resolution No. 2024-05 Adopting the draft Water Management Plan Updates of the San Joaquin River Exchange Contractors Water Authority's Member Entities, CCID, SLCC, FCWD and CCC.

A motion was made by Alternate Director Martin and seconded by Vice-Chair Stearns to approve Resolution No. 2024-05. The motion was unanimously approved.

**LEGISLATIVE REPORTS:**

The Executive Director referred to the reports included in the Board packets and said that he had covered this matter during his report earlier in the meeting.

**PUBLIC OUTREACH:**

The Executive Director referred to the report provided in the Board packets.

**ATTORNEY'S REPORT:**

Attorney Andrew McClure said there has been no decision on the Friant Litigation. The Court of Appeal has scheduled the oral arguments on both the Friant Water Supply Protection Authority and the Sierra Club, et al. for January 16, 2025. He also stated that there were several lawsuits filed alleging DWR violated CEQA by adopting an EIR and Incidental Take Permit for long term State Water Project Delta Operations that did not adequately consider CVP Operations, adding that no injunction or restraining orders have been filed.

**FOUR ENTITIES' MANAGER REPORTS:**

**Columbia Canal Company:** Manager Gardner said CCC had deliveries of 3,700 AF in November, and CCC's system was shut down November 25<sup>th</sup>. They will begin their winter construction projects on December 16<sup>th</sup>.

**Firebaugh Canal Water District:** Manager Bryant stated they are delivering some pre-irrigation water; will be shutting down around December 16<sup>th</sup>. They are in the planning process of lining two miles on their Third Lift Canal and will start on that project in Fall 2026. They will be starting their winter projects and should start their system up around February 1, 2025.

**San Luis Canal Company:** Manager Wiersma said they delivered around 4,600 AF in November, a little below average month. They also wrapped up their flow tests and thanked the Water Resources Specialist for his assistance during that process. They are spending a lot of time on construction projects and invited all to their upcoming Christmas Party.

**Central California Irrigation District:** Manager Martin reported on the project they have partnered in with the City of Dos Palos to restore a Colony system bridge. They are wrapping up their deliveries for the year and will be focusing on their winter projects.

**JANUARY BOARD MEETING:**

A motion was made by Vice-Chair Stearns and seconded by Alternate Director Martin to change the January Board meeting to Friday, January 10, 2025.

**INFORMATIONAL:**

There was no information provided.

Chair Cardella adjourned the meeting to a recess at 9:55 a.m.

**CLOSED SESSION:**

The meeting was adjourned to Closed Session at 10:03 a.m.

The Chair returned the meeting to Open Session at 10:37 a.m. and announced that direction was given to staff and legal counsel.

No further business came before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 10:37 a.m.

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CHRIS CARDELLA, CHAIR

Attest a true record of proceedings had  
And taken at the foregoing meeting, our  
Presence thereat and our consent thereto.

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CHRIS WHITE, SECRETARY

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JARRETT MARTIN, ALTERNATE DIRECTOR

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CANNON MICHAEL, DIRECTOR

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MIKE STEARNS, VICE-CHAIR