



**SANTA MONICA BAY  
RESTORATION COMMISSION**  
MANAGEMENT CONFERENCE OF THE NATIONAL ESTUARY PROGRAM

**SANTA MONICA BAY RESTORATION COMMISSION**

**Date:** Thursday, May 20, 2021

**Time:** 1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

**Meeting Location:** Remote Meeting Only

Charlie Caspary chaired the Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission's (Commission) Executive Committee meeting and called the meeting to order at 1:01 pm. Commission staff provided an overview of the meeting protocols. Introductions followed.

**1) Comments from Members of the Public on Items Not on the Agenda and Public Testimony on All Agenda Items**

Roy van de Hoek commented on the Ballona Wetlands Ecological Reserve (Reserve) and SoCal Gas's operations near the Reserve.

**2) Executive Committee Business**

**a) Order of Agenda**

Caspary amended the order of the agenda to move Item 3 before Item 2.e without objection.

**b) Reports from the Chief Administrative Director and Santa Monica Bay National Estuary Program (NEP) Director**

Guangyu Wang reported on the Commission staff's work activities including collaboration with The Bay Foundation to finalize the Santa Monica Bay NEP Fiscal Year 2022 Annual Work Plan, the revised Comprehensive Monitoring Program (CMP), the Santa Monica Bay NEP semi-annual report, and the Santa Monica Bay NEP logo; coordination with Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts, City of Los Angeles Sanitation and Environment, and Chevron to report on progress implementing the CMP at the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board meeting; Proposition 84 grant management; and support of ongoing litigation.

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Tom Ford presented the Santa Monica Bay NEP logo and reported on its development in collaboration with Commission staff and US EPA staff. Tom Ford also reported on the development of a dedicated website for the Santa Monica Bay NEP and the Santa Monica Bay NEP semi-annual report. Ford recommended scheduling an item regarding virtual engagement highlights from The Bay Foundation for the June 17, 2021 Governing Board meeting and scheduling an update on the Community-Based Restoration at Ballona Wetlands project for the August 19, 2021 Governing Board meeting. Ford also highlighted Santa Monica Bay NEP activities carried out by The Bay Foundation including abalone outplanting; eelgrass transplanting; kelp forest restoration monitoring; Culver City rain garden site maintenance; Santa Monica Beach Restoration Pilot Project monitoring; Malibu Living Shoreline Project iceplant removal; Manhattan Beach and LAX Dunes Restoration Projects outreach and permitting; supporting Topanga Lagoon Restoration Planning project and Malibu Lagoon monitoring; news on wastewater recycling and a study on the sources of anthropogenic nitrogen by UCLA; marine protected areas (MPAs) outreach and education; Coastal Research Institute reopening; extension of R2Deep2's range to explore deeper habitats of the Bay; temporary suspension of aerial surveys of vessels and MPAs due to COVID-19; and Palos Verdes Shelf Technical Information Exchange Group's meeting participation.

**Member Comments**

Caspary recommended the Governing Board consider adoption of a resolution regarding endorsement of the new Santa Monica Bay NEP logo. Caspary also requested an update on Superfund sites in Santa Monica Bay at a future meeting. Guangyu Wang recommended to include discussion of Caspary's and Ford's suggested agenda items under Item 2.d.

Member comments followed on the study regarding sources of anthropogenic nitrogen and a potential presentation on The Bay Foundation's kelp restoration work.

**c) Consideration of Approval of March 18, 2021 Executive Committee Meeting Minutes**

The meeting minutes were approved as published by roll-call vote. Moved: Shelley Luce. Seconded: Martha Tremblay.

**d) Establish the Governing Board Agenda for the June 17, 2021 Governing Board Meeting**

**i) Consideration of Approval of Proposition 50 Grant Program Award Process and Request for Proposals**

Caitlin Gray introduced this item and provided background information on the Commission's Proposition 50 grant program, including remaining funds available for project recommendations and funding priorities established by the Governing Board, development of the preliminary draft Request for

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Proposals (RFP), and staff recommendation for the Executive Committee to schedule this item for the June 17, 2021 Governing Board meeting in order to meet encumbrance deadlines.

**Member Comments**

Casparly requested for staff to clarify in the final draft RFP the composition and conflict of interest guidelines for the proposal review panel and how match funds will be evaluated. Member comments followed on the preliminary draft RFP, including the funding range available to projects, match requirements, and the proposal review panel's conflict of interest statements. Guangyu Wang stated that the preliminary draft RFP strongly encourages collaboration between organizations involved in similar project activities to minimize the number of projects for staff to manage while not dissuading applications from smaller organizations, including grassroots organizations that may propose lower-cost projects. Guangyu Wang also informed members that match funds are not required for this grant program but are strongly encouraged.

**ii) Consideration of Adoption of Recommendations regarding Safe Clean Water Program Fiscal Year 2021-2022 Stormwater Investment Plans within the Santa Monica Bay Watershed**

Caitlin Gray introduced this item and provided background on the Los Angeles County Safe Clean Water Program (SCW Program) and outlined staff's approach for developing recommendations on the Fiscal Year 2021-2022 (FY21-22) Stormwater Investment Plans (SIPs) within the Santa Monica Bay watershed, including coordinating with SCW Program staff for supporting information and their presentation at the Governing Board meeting. Staff recommended for the Executive Committee to schedule this item for the June 17, 2021 Governing Board meeting in order to convey any recommendations to the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors prior to their consideration of approval, anticipated in July 2021.

**Member Comments**

Casparly requested for the Commission's Technical Advisory Committee to provide input on the SIPs for the Governing Board's consideration, if feasible. Member comments followed on sending the lists of projects included in the SIPs in advance of the Governing Board meeting, if the list would include projects outside of the Santa Monica Bay watershed, and the number of projects proposed in each SIP. Staff informed members that staff will focus on projects within the Santa Monica Bay watershed and provided an estimate on the average number of projects proposed in each SIP.

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**iii) Consideration of Adoption of Resolution regarding Public Access at the Ballona Wetlands Ecological Reserve**

Caitlin Gray introduced this item and outlined staff's recommendation for the Executive Committee to schedule for the June 17, 2021 Governing Board meeting the consideration of adoption of a resolution expressing non-binding recommendations to California Department of Fish & Wildlife (CDFW) regarding public access at the Reserve.

**Public Comment**

Walter Lamb commented on public access at the Reserve and requested clarification on funding limitations referenced in CDFW's memorandum regarding public access at the Reserve (CDFW Memo).

Roy van de Hoek commented on public access at the Reserve and safety concerns regarding existing oil wells at the Reserve.

Jane Velez-Mitchell commented on the Reserve, including public access and an alternative restoration plan.

Scott Culbertson commented on public access at the Reserve and improvements to public access included in the restoration plan.

Margot Griswold commented on public access at the Reserve and potential constraints for the public to access other parks referenced in the CDFW Memo.

Kathy Knight commented in support of Margot Griswold and commented on clean up and maintenance of the Reserve and the restoration plan for the Reserve, including concerns regarding freshwater aquifers.

Patricia McPherson commented in support of Walter Lamb, Margot Griswold, and Kathy Knight and commented on the restoration plan for the Reserve, including concerns regarding freshwater aquifers.

**Member Comments**

Member Shelley Luce shared concerns about encouraging public access that may endanger the public and expose the State to legal liability. Member Luce suggested adding "whereas" clauses to the proposed draft resolution regarding the State's restoration plan for the Reserve and limited public services, presence of homeless encampments, and illegal activities in portions of the Reserve that may endanger the public and expose the State to legal liability.

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Members discussed possible procedures for the Executive Committee to revise the proposed draft resolution. Eric Gillman suggested the Executive Committee could choose to distribute the draft resolution as proposed by Commission staff or direct Commission staff to revise the proposed draft resolution for the Governing Board's consideration.

Laurie Newman commented on her preference as a Governing Board member for the Executive Committee's input being incorporated on items before bringing to the Governing Board. Caspary allowed members of the public to make additional comments.

### **Public Comment**

Walter Lamb requested the public be able to comment on the proposed amendments and commented on Ballona Wetlands Land Trust's volunteers.

Roy van de Hoek commented on the draft resolution and suggested including CDFW's explanations for public access issues at the Reserve.

Jane Velez-Mitchell commented on the Reserve, including the restoration plan and unhoused residents.

Patricia McPherson commented in support of Jane Velez-Mitchell and commented on restrooms available near the Reserve and experiences at Playa Vista.

### **Member Comments**

Claire Waggoner, alternate for Jonathan Bishop, suggested that the Executive Committee members did not need to agree with Member Luce's proposed "whereas" clauses. But that the Executive Committee could direct Staff to include these clauses in the proposed final draft resolution as optional "whereas" clauses to allow the public to review the optional "whereas" clauses prior to the Governing Board's consideration of adoption of the resolution. The Executive Committee directed Commission staff to consider adding the optional "whereas" clauses below to the proposed draft resolution for the Governing Board's consideration. Moved: Shelley Luce. Seconded: Kelly Clark.

- "Whereas, the Reserve has few public services in most areas and a known presence of homeless encampments and illegal activities including drug use and the storage, processing, and transportation of stolen goods"
- "Whereas, substantial hazards are present that endanger the public and expose the State of California to legal liability"

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- “Whereas, the best way to increase public access is to implement the State’s restoration plan with its trail system and critical services including restrooms, drinking fountains, and other services”

Guangyu Wang informed members that the June 17, 2021 Governing Board meeting may be held in a hybrid format to allow for both in-person and remote participation, pending directive from the Governor’s office.

**Member Comments**

Member comments followed on a hybrid format and time management of the June 17, 2021 Governing Board meeting.

The agenda for the June 17, 2021 Governing Board meeting was approved by roll-call vote with the following agenda items: Items identified as 2.d.i, 2.d.ii, and 2.d.iii; consideration of adoption of the resolution regarding the logo of the Santa Monica Bay NEP; and virtual engagement highlights from The Bay Foundation. Moved: Timothy Lippman. Seconded: Martha Tremblay.

**e) Closed Session**

Eric Gillman announced closed session. Open session adjourned at 3:07 pm. Closed session adjourned and open session reconvened at 3:17 pm. Eric Gillman reported there was nothing to report from closed session.

**3) Member Comments and Announcements Regarding Matters not on the Agenda**

Martha Tremblay commented on the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board’s approval of the Los Angeles County Sanitation District’s special study to inform next steps on the Palos Verdes Shelf Superfund Site.

Claire Waggoner commented that the vacancy to fill Guangyu Wang’s position is still open for applications.

Shelley Luce commented on a concept proposal to extend the Ballona Creek bike path and create greenspace along the path, including a small park.

Charlie Caspary provided an update on Assembly Bill 963 (Baldwin Hills Conservancy (BHC): urban watersheds conservancy expansion).

Erica Yelensky offered to coordinate with US EPA staff to schedule an update on the Palos Verdes Shelf Superfund Site at a future meeting and commented on the ability to offer a remote meeting option.

The meeting adjourned at 3:17 pm.

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**Attendance:**

**Voting Members and Alternates of the Executive Committee:**

EJ Caldwell, At-Large Representative (West Basin Municipal Water District)  
Charlie Caspary, Las Virgenes Municipal Water District  
Kelly Clark, Public Member (Environmental/Public Interest), Los Angeles Waterkeeper  
Gloria Gray, At-Large Representative (West Basin Municipal Water District)  
Timothy Lippman, LA County Board of Supervisors (3rd District)  
Shelley Luce, Environmental/Public Interest (Heal the Bay)  
Martha Tremblay, Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County  
Claire Waggoner, State Water Resources Control Board

**Non-Voting Members and Alternates of the Executive Committee:**

Tom Ford, Santa Monica Bay NEP Director  
Erica Yelensky, US EPA Region 9

**Commission and State Water Board Staff:**

Eric Gillman, State Water Board  
Caitlin Gray, Commission  
Guangyu Wang, Commission

**Other Attendees:**

Jane Velez-Mitchell  
Joe Young  
Kathy Knight  
Laurie Newman, The Bay Foundation  
Margot Griswald  
Patricia McPherson  
Randy Rodriguez, California Department Fish & Wildlife  
Rich Burg, California Department Fish & Wildlife  
Richard Brody, California Department Fish & Wildlife  
Roy van de Hoek  
Scott Culbertson, Friends of Ballona Wetlands  
Tim Dillingham  
Walter Lamb, Ballona Wetlands Land Trust