

**CalDesal State Legislative Committee Meeting Notes**

**Monday, May 18, 2020**

**Conference Call Meeting**

**3:00-4:00 p.m.**

**Members present:**

E.J. Caldwell, Chair, West Basin Municipal Water District

Heather Baez, Municipal Water District of Orange County

Danielle Coats, Eastern Municipal Water District

Glenn Farrell, San Diego County Water Authority

Cory Kimball, Eastern Municipal Water District

Bridgette McGowan, Edelstein, Gilbert, Robson & Smith (for OCWD)

Rosalie Thompson, Metropolitan Water District of Southern California

**Guests:** Wendy Ridderbusch, Executive Director

The meeting began at 3:02 p.m. Chair E.J. Caldwell, West Basin Municipal Water District called the meeting to order and thanked the committee for taking the time to join the meeting and participate in sharing information with each other in the midst of the State Legislature’s unprecedented truncated session this year due to the coronavirus.

**State Legislative Activity:**

* **Covid-19 and the State Legislature**— Both houses of the Legislature are back in session with a shorter timeframe and many less bills will be heard in policy committees. They decided not to try and meet remotely.
* The traditional May Revise was released on May 15th. The outlook is bleak for California state finances. There will be in essence a second May Revise that will be released at the end of July or early August on April 15th because state taxes are not due until July 15th. At that point another look at the Budget will take place during the summer more along the lines of what we all recognize as a May Revise type of assessment. This will be a second Budget and the legislature will go through the Budget process for a third time based on the summer tax proceeds.
* **General Obligation Climate Resiliency Bonds or Economic Stimulus Bond status** – the Administration pushed back on the Legislature and rejected the idea of a Climate Change Resiliency Bond because it is too expensive in the wake of the recent economic collapse due to the coronavirus.
* The Legislature decided to plow ahead with an Economic Stimulus Bond instead of a Climate Resiliency Bond making minor cosmetic changes with wording in the bond bill. ACWA is continuing to lobby the legislature to support desalination in whatever general obligation bond is passed this year.
* Rosie Thompson briefed the committee on the ACWA workgroup meeting, noting that the legislative strategy to pivot from climate resiliency to economic stimulus would be to highlight the construction jobs that would come out of these investments for water infrastructure projects. ACWA has been reaching out to the various legislative budget committee and subcommittee staff to gauge interest and any progress during this fluid period. Rosie noted that there were separate, upcoming Budget Subcommittee meetings in both the Assembly and Senate on calendar later this month.

**CalDesal Updates**

* ACWA Conference moved from May to July 28-31 in Monterey, and now it has moved to 100% virtual online two-day conference on July 29 and 30.
* Members’ Only website page on the CalDesal website. Please take time to visit.
* Virtual Happy Hours? Wendy asked committee members if they had participated in any of the new virtual happy hours on Zoom and if so if they wouldn’t mind sharing about the experience as CalDesal is considering holding one either as part of the ACWA conference, or as a possible standalone event. Heather Baez told the committee that they have had large webinars and if you have ten or less it works but with more its too unwieldy. Danielle Coats offered that you could have something fun like a theme or a question that everyone answers to liven up the presentation and engage the virtual attendees. The committee talked about some fun ideas that could be undertaken on that front.
* Southwest Strategies are working on an outreach communications contract with CalDesal to enhance the organization’s presence and overhauling message points. A refreshed logo will be released next month.
* CalDesal elections – will be held in December at the ACWA Fall Conference hopefully in person later this year. There are four officer positions on the thirteen-member Executive Committee. The terms run from January 1, 2021-December 31, 2022. Please contact Wendy directly if you or someone in your agency is interested.
* Women In Desal – August 19th is set for a socially distanced physical meeting. Not certain if that will occur or if it will need to be moved to later in the fall.

**Next meeting is on Monday, June 15, 2020 from 3:00-4:00 p.m. The Committee is not meeting during the summer legislative recess.**

**The meeting was adjourned by EJ Caldwell at 3:40 p.m.**