

**CalDesal Regulatory Committee Meeting Notes**

**Wednesday, April 22, 2020**

**2:00-3:00 p.m.**

**Members present:**

Hannah Ake, Metropolitan Water District of Southern California

Kim Adamson, Liberty Utilities

Gilad Cohen, IDE

Jeremy Crutchfield, San Diego County Water Authority

Joe Monaco, Dudek

Makrom Shatila, Michael Baker International

Rich Svindland, CalAm

Warren Teitz, Metropolitan Water District of Southern California

Kevin Thomas, Kimley-Horn

**Guests:** Eric Miller, Miller Marine Science and Consulting and Wendy Ridderbusch, Executive Director

Chair Kevin Thomas called the meeting to order at 2:03 p.m.

ED Wendy Ridderbusch gave an update on items of interest at CalDesal:

**Covid-19 Impacts Update:**

* **ACWA Summer Conference** -- Moved from May 5-8 to July 28-31 due to Governor Newsom’s Stay-at-Home order. He has indicated no large gatherings will be held this summer so ACWA may need to cancel this meeting or the ACWA conference structure may be able to be modified since it is still three months away. We will stay tuned.

The CalDesal BOD will meet either in person in Monterey or virtually by video/phone conference call on Wednesday, 7/29

* **State Legislative Session** -- recessed on March 16 because of Covid-19 the first unscheduled work stoppage in 158 years. They are scheduled to return in mid-May. Like everything else nowadays that is subject to change. The newest information is they could return on May 4th for a short month of abbreviated policy committees. The bill load will be greatly reduced if this happens. Only Covid-19 related bills will most likely be heard.
* **Federal and State Bond Funding** -- Working with our active and connected member agencies, we were able to force inclusion of funding into ACWA’s ask on the general obligation climate change resiliency bond. We were also pleased to find out that Southern California Water Committee ended up supporting desalination as one of their “asks” on the bond. That was not a given as some within SCWC view desal as controversial. While a bond may not be moving in 2020 when it does get teed back up, we will be in a strong position to obtain a funding piece within that bond for brackish and ocean water desal. CalDesal is still participating in the negotiations on bond language and will know in short order whether a climate resiliency bond will be moving forward this year.
* With respect to federal funding, CalDesal sent a support letter to Senator Feinstein on her S 1392 which proposes $80 million for desal funding. We are also investigating rumors of a possible bipartisan federal stimulus infrastructure bond that could be moving through Congress and contain money for water, potentially including desalination. Wendy is coordinating with state lobbyists who also work with federal lobbyists to track down the recent developments on this so that CalDesal can weigh in.
* **CalDesal social media activity: Members’ Only website update** – CalDesal social media activity:

Hope you received the e-mail that was sent to you at the beginning of April giving you instructions on how to set up your log-in and password to enable your access to our members’ only page of our website. If you have not done so and need assistance, please e-mail me so I can send you the directions and help you get onto our site. All our meeting agendas and notes for the policy committees including Executive, Legislative, Regulatory, and Outreach Communications are now on the page as well as our member roster, and items like the powerpoints from our February annual meeting that many folks wanted to access. If you have any requests for information to be placed on this page, please let me know your thoughts and we will try to accommodate you!

* **Voluntary Contribution “Pass the Hat” for Outreach Communications Contract Status** – Voluntary Contribution “Pass the Hat” for Outreach Communications Contract Status -- We signed a contract with Southwest Strategies a communications firm with funding that was donated by a few of our current members voluntarily for this specific purpose.

The primary objectives of the contract deliverables are to improve CalDesal’s visibility and positive recognition, increase awareness of desalination among key stakeholders like legislators and regulators and the public as well as unify and enhance CalDesal messaging and publications to aid membership recruitment.

We want to make sure that members understand what we are doing and that we are transparent! CalDesal and its members will be benefitting from this communications assistance. Stay tuned for more on this as we move through this year.

* **Women In Desal Update** – CalDesal is working with President of the West Basin Municipal Water District and Chair of Metropolitan Water District of Southern California Gloria Gray and a few companies who are members of our organization to assist her in the logistics of forming her new group and holding the first meeting of what will be quarterly meetings with women who work in and around the desal industry in California. The first meeting has been tentatively set for mid-July but may be postponed until the stay-at-home order is lifted by Governor Newsom.
* **Annual Dues Timeline** – CalDesal works from a fiscal year calendar which begins on July 1 of each year. This year we are sending out our Annual Dues invoice on May 15th and it will be due by June 30th. We are aiming for a smoother process this year so we will be mailing a hard copy as well as e-mailed invoice. If you have any questions or concerns about your membership, please contact Wendy directly via e-mail or call her.

Chair Kevin Thomas

**Recent Regulatory Activity:**

* **Potential Ocean Plan Amendments Reopening List Draft Discussion** – Wendy does not want this to fall off CalDesal’s policy issue radar. As previously discussed, the organization should have a draft of items, supported by the Regulatory Committee, that it would like to request consideration of if the Ocean Plan Amendment does in fact get reopened by the State Water Resources Control Board in 2020 or 2021.
* Jeremy Crutchfield suggested that a search in the CalDesal “vault” for talking points of what the organization wanted in 2013, 2014, and 2015 when the OPA was created could prove helpful in formulating a current list of asks for this potential upcoming process. Wendy agreed that she would try and locate that in the electronic files. Warren Teitz spoke up and revealed that he did work on the original OPA and that CalDesal should consider requesting some more recent issues such as a type of reasonable cap on expensive, additional studies requested by the State Board. This is just an example of the type of asks we should be considering as we move forward.
* Wendy asked for volunteers to form a separate working group on the OPA to craft this list so that the organization could be prepared. The following individuals agreed to participate on the working group: Joe Monaco, Warren Teitz, Hannah Ake, Stan Williams/Peter MacLaggan, Jeremy Crutchfield/Bob Yamada, and Kevin Thomas.
* Gilad Cohen asked for an update on the California Coastal Commission and whether it was back to operations after members and their staff were directly impacted by Covid-19. Rich Svindland informed that the Chair was very ill but is now healing but may not yet be back to work.
* **Project Regulatory Permitting Updates:** CalAm, Doheny, HB. Rich gave an update on the CalAm project in Marina. There will be an upcoming vote on April 27 to approve a supplemental EIR for the water reuse project that if approved will take away some of the need for the desal project and take a lot the wind out of its sails. Rich plans to send an update to Wendy via e-mail which she can then forward on any developments. The desal project has been delayed with it not coming before the Coastal Commission until the end of 2020.
* Guest Eric Miller let the committee know that Doheny has a federal grant that is in process from the Bureau of Reclamation.
* Huntington Beach has been delayed due to Covid-19. CalDesal will keep these projects on the agenda so that they may be periodically updated.

**Upcoming Regulatory Activity:**

* Hearings/Workshops rescheduled? Nothing at this time.
* Gilad Cohen shared with the Committee that he is seeing a lot of internet traffic and involvement by professionals with webinars that his company IDE is running. He suggested that CalDesal consider creating a webinar for legislative staff to educate them about desalination during this unusual pandemic when they may have more time. Wendy agreed and also urged the committee to visit their local Senators and Assembly Members.
* Warren Teitz informed the committee that the Ocean Protection Council finalized their draft of their five-year plan. It included language supporting the State Water Resources Control Board in their prioritization of updating the desalination amendment and adds to the drumbeat of reopening.
* Wendy told the Committee that the Outreach Communications Committee will be overhauling a draft of a response to the NRDC’s comment on Governor Newsom’s Water Resiliency Portfolio which references Carlsbad and desalination in general.

 Next Regulatory Committee Meeting: **May 27, 2020 at 2:00 p.m.**

**Adjourned by Chair Kevin Thomas at 2:45 p.m.**