

**CalDesal Regulatory Committee Meeting Notes**

**Wednesday, March 25, 2020**

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

**Members present:**

Hannah Ake, Metropolitan Water District of Southern California

Lyndsey Bloxom, Water Replenishment District

Charles Busslinger, Municipal Water District of Orange County

Alejandro Cana, West Basin MWD

Gilad Cohen, IDE

Jeremy Crutchfield, San Diego County Water Authority

Joshua Haggmark, City of Santa Barbara

Sarah Iza, City of Santa Barbara

Jessica Jones, Poseidon Water

Rich Svindland, CalAm

Warren Teitz, Metropolitan Water District of Southern California

**Members absent:**

Kevin Thomas, Kimley-Horn, (Chair) *excused absence*

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

Executive Director Wendy Ridderbusch noted that Chair Kevin Thomas was involved in a Covid-19 emergency meeting at his company and would be unable to join and lead the call so she would be chairing this particular meeting.

**Recent Regulatory Activity within City of Santa Barbara.** She introduced both Joshua Haggmark and Sarah Iza from the City of Santa Barbara to discuss their recent regulatory update on their pending application with the Coastal Commission. Joshua reported that they were able to get their intake screens cleaned and that the whole process went well. Repair activities on their weir box that is located on the beach was a simple repair request sent to the Coastal Commission. Channelkeepers and Surfriders at the last minute sent comments in response, trying to reopen the City’s existing permit making the claim that the proposed activity was not repair and maintenance. The CCC was scheduled to hear the issue on March 10 but continued it to April. The April meeting has now been cancelled due to Covid-19 which has swept up commission and staff member in its clutches. The City is working to address the concern that Channelkeepers has and as far as they know the Coastal Commission staff is still in agreement with the City and want to help them address the comments. They do believe that this is a discrete action and they don’t believe that it requires reopening their permits. The City is going to be careful about how they legally respond to those concerns. They City was prepared to take on the Channelkeepers at the March 10 meeting because there were inaccuracies in their comments but Tom Luster from the CCC had said that they supported the direction that the City was headed and wanted some more time to prepare so that they could have a thoughtful response to their concerns and bolster their argument. The City feels good about being aligned with Coastal Commission staff on this.

Eric asked if Channelkeepers and Surfriders were trying to reopen the City’s NPDES permit and trying to claim that this action should push it under the OPA provisions now? He wondered what exactly were Channelkeepers trying to reopen? Eric remarked that looking at their comment letter it seemed that they were trying to get the City to make some aggressive changes and were using the comments as an end-run around the successful completion of the project.

Sarah answered that the Channelkeepers have claimed that the original CDPs that the City had -- one in 1991 and another in 1995 -- for both the temporary and permanent operations should be reopened because it is new development within the coastal zone. The City’s stance is that it is repair and maintenance although they want to move the weir box which is right in the current surf zone up the beach. The City has offered a more than adequate mitigation plan and it is basically a replacement. The City felt that it could be a “win-win” to physically move the weir box up and out of the surf zone into the dunes which is a less valuable space so the coastal commission staff are excited about that and thought it was a great idea. The Channelkeepers are coming in now trying to make this out to be a major change in the project. The City could leave the weir box right where it is in the surf zone but they were trying to be proactive and helpful. There were no additional questions for Josh and Sarah from the City of Santa Barbara so they then exited the call.

Wendy then returned to the agenda:

**ACWA Spring Conference** has been postponed from the original May 2020 dates to a Summer Conference now scheduled for July 28-31, 2020. It will still be held in same location in Monterey. The CalDesal Board Meeting and the Mixer will be held on Wednesday, July 29th. Please contact Nathan at CAMS for sponsorship opportunities at Nathan@caladmanagement.com.

Social Media Activity is proceeding with the **CalDesal Members’ Only page** of the website. The Outreach Communications Committee is beta testing it and then the Executive Committee and general membership will be invited to create a log-in name and password in order to access the site where all the committee agendas and meeting notes will be placed along with the Bylaws, Rosters, Annual Conference program powerpoint presentations, etc. can be accessed. Please take a moment and logon and give Wendy feedback on content, etc.

The new **Technical Innovation Committee** was created by the Executive Committee last week. It will be chaired by Mark Donovan from GHD, with Gilad Cohen with IDE serving as Vice-Chair.

CalDesal’s Executive Committee also voted to support facilitating the new **Women in Desal** group forming under President of West Basin MWD’s Board of Directors and Chairwoman of Metropolitan Water District of Southern California’s Board Gloria Gray’s leadership. The group’s purpose is to create a networking arena

**Recent Regulatory Activity continued** **with Ocean Plan Amendment list.** The group is going to individually prepare their own list of items to bring forward to the group for a fuller discussion during the upcoming April meeting. Warren feels that creating this list in advance of needing it is critical. He also shared that they will have a list of several items. Wendy asked the committee to send her their proposed items via e-mail so that she could compile one list for discussion. The goal is that CalDesal will be prepared in advance for this and not be eight steps behind if or when it occurs.

**Regulatory Project Permitting Updates:**

* **CalAm --** They are frustrated with the California Coastal Commission but are working through a revised scope of work that took the CCC three months to develop for the groundwater modeling impacts. They are not going to be able to comply with the permit streamlining act so that asking CalAm to withdraw their application and then reapply. CalAm is concerned that they will never get to the point of deeming that the application is complete and they would be perpetually stalled. The attorneys are working through this. The whole process is not moving quickly. Wendy asked if Covid-19 will interfere with any upcoming hearings or progress? Rich responded that they were supposed to have the hearing in March and they have a stipulation with the Coastal Commission that their 180 days is up in July. They were hoping to then get on the June meeting agenda. The new groundwater modeling scope of work would be done at best in six months so that pushes it out until late fall 2020 or early next year in 2021. They think Covid-19 won’t have as large of an impact at that point in time. They are attempting to meet with folks from Governor Gavin Newsom’s administration to press them on the disconnect between state agencies like the SWRCB and DWR granting funds to CalAm for the project and yet at the same time the Coastal Commission not appearing to support the project. They are trying to seek some clarity.
* **Huntington Beach --** The Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Control Board workshop has been postponed. They are thinking about using Zoom to facilitate public participation. They will reschedule the workshop at the end of April or beginning of May. They are still trying to target a June hearing for the project.

**NRDC’s comments on Governor Newsom’s Water Resilience Portfolio.** CalDesal is weighing a response to this commentary that did not give the full story of desalination with respect to both the Carlsbad desal facility and what has occurred in Australia. Wendy will attach the NRDC comments to the meeting notes that will be circulated to the Regulatory Committee members next week.

Next Regulatory Committee Meeting: **April 22, 2020 at 2:00 p.m.**

**Adjourned by ED Wendy Ridderbusch at 2:31 p.m.**