



MEETING OF THE

WATER POLICY TASK FORCE

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Riverside County Transportation Commission: Robin Lowe, Hemet

Ventura County Transportation Commission: Keith Millhouse, Moorpark

**Thursday, June 28, 2007
10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.**

**SCAG Offices
818 West 7th Street, 12th Floor
Conference Room – San Bernardino
Los Angeles, CA 90017
213.236.1800**

If members of the public wish to review the attachments or have any questions on any of the agenda items, please contact Dan Griset at 213.236.1895 or griset@scag.ca.gov

SCAG, in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), will accommodate persons who require a modification of accommodation in order to participate in this meeting. If you require such assistance, please contact SCAG at (213) 236-1868 at least 72 hours in advance of the meeting to enable SCAG to make reasonable arrangements. To request documents related to this document in an alternative format, please contact (213) 236-1868.

Agenda
WATER POLICY TASK FORCE
June 28, 2007

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1.0 CALL TO ORDER

2.0 PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Members of the public desiring to speak on an agenda item or another item, but within the purview of this Task Force, must notify staff to the Task Force prior to the meeting. At the discretion of the Chair public comments may be limited to three minutes.

3.0 APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Action minutes for the December 21, 2006, February 22, 2007 and April 26, 2007 meetings will be available at the meeting and the website for Task Force approval.

4.0 PRESENTATION ITEMS FOR THE TASK FORCE

4.1 Green Visions Plan

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Travis Longcore, Research Assistant Professor at USC and UCLA, will update the Task Force on the Green Visions Plan for Southern California watersheds in the 21st Century.

4.2 Securing Southern California's Water Future

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Jeff Kightlinger, General Manager of the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, will brief the Task Force on the recent state action blocking water diversions to the California Aqueduct from the Sacramento-San Joaquin Rivers Delta and on the outlines of a new policy approach by which southern California might influence a long-term resolution of environmental, conveyance and water storage issues.

4.3 A New Water Management Initiative in the Santa Ana River Watershed

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Celeste Cantu, General Manager of the Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority, will present the goals of a new initiative recently formed in the Santa Ana River Watershed to advance integrated water management policy and practices.

4.4 Legislative Report from Sacramento

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Kathy Cole, Chief Lobbyist for Metropolitan Water District in Sacramento, will brief the Task Force on pending legislation and other water issues of statewide and regional significance.

4.5 A Preferred Alternative for Restoration of the Salton Sea

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Dale Hoffman-Floerke, Chief of the Colorado River and Salton Sea Office of the California Department of Water Resources, will discuss the preferred alternative for restoration of the Salton Sea recently announced by Secretary for Resources, Mike Chrisman. This proposal comes with an estimated cost of nearly \$9 billion.

5.0 CHAIR'S REPORT

6.0 STAFF REPORT

7.0 TASK FORCE INFORMATION SHARING

8.0 COMMENT PERIOD

10.0 ADJOURNMENT

The next Task Force meeting will be held on September 27, 2007 at the SCAG offices.

MEMORANDUM TO THE WATER POLICY TASK FORCE

June 28, 2007

TO: *Members of the Water Policy Task Force*

FROM: *Daniel E. Griset, Program Manager, 213.236.1895, griset@scag.ca.gov*

SUBJECT: *Green Visions Plan for Southern California*

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Receive for future policy consideration.

BACKGROUND:

The mission of the Green Visions Plan for 21st Century Southern California is to provide a guide to habitat conservation, watershed health and recreational open space for the Los Angeles metropolitan region, and to design planning and decision-support tools to nurture a living green matrix for southern California. The goals are to protect and restore natural areas, restore natural hydrological function, promote equitable access to open space, and maximize support via multiple-use facilities. The Plan is a joint venture between the University of Southern California and the region's land conservancies, including the Rivers and Mountains Conservancy, Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, Coastal Conservancy, and Baldwin Hills Conservancy.

The Green Visions Plan aims to set forth a needs-based, long-range plan designed to help the many actors involved in shaping the region's future. Green Visions highlights the opportunities and constraints that may arise as habitat conservation and restoration projects, open space acquisitions and recreation improvements, and efforts to protect watersheds are proposed and implemented. The tools and data developed as part of the Plan will also expand the analytic and planning capabilities of local agencies and organizations that seek to attract public funding or allocate their own resources, reduce the fragmented, piecemeal approach to regional resource planning, and promote projects whose collective impacts – because they are part of a larger scientifically grounded vision – are greater than the sum of their parts.

The long-term goals of the Green Visions Plan are to:

- Protect and restore natural areas to ensure the persistence of native biodiversity and reintroduction of historically present natural communities;
- Restore natural function to the hydrological cycle to maximize groundwater recharge, improve storm water quality, and minimize flood hazards;

- Increase and ensure equitable access for residents to a range of open space types and recreational opportunities, and thereby reduce socioeconomic and geographic disparities in present-day patterns of access to these types of resources; and
- Maximize political and financial support for the Plan by proposing multiple-use facilities wherever possible to meet the goals of habitat restoration and conservation, restoration of hydroecological functions, and provision of recreational open space.

The scope of the Green Visions Plan:



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June 28, 2007

TO: *Members of the Water Policy Task Force*

FROM: *Daniel E. Griset, Program Manager, 213.236.1895, griset@scag.ca.gov*

SUBJECT: *Securing Southern California's Water Future*

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Support Bay-Delta related legislation in which ecosystem restoration, water conveyance and water storage projects are implemented within a coordinated, integrated management framework. This framework must consider all stakeholders (e.g., transportation, utilities, agriculture, recreation, communities, as well as water) and include habitat conservation, species protection, water quality and supply reliability, flood protection and cost-effective water management. Project financing should be guided by the "beneficiary pays" principle as it applies to all stakeholders and their varying interests.

BACKGROUND:

Jeffrey Kightlinger, General Manager of the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD), will brief the Task Force on a new policy framework adopted by the MWD Board to guide its efforts in resolving the continuing water and ecosystem problems in the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta that are endangering southern California and other urban and agricultural regions in the state.

This framework has three components:

- Short-Term Action Plan. Actions over next 18 months to secure short-term permits for operating the State Water Project Banks pumping plant and avoiding incidental take of threatened or endangered species; implementing/funding a Delta Levee Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan; and selection and approval of key elements of the Bay-Delta Conservation Plan and long-term Delta Vision.
- Mid-Term Action Plan. Actions prior to a long-term Delta solution to secure long-term operating permits for the State Water Project under the Bay-Delta Conservation Plan; develop an implementation plan and environmental documentation for the preferred long-term Delta Vision; and implementation of early start "no regrets" ecosystem restoration projects.
- Long-Term Action Plan. Actions to fully implement, govern and finance the elements of a long-term Delta Vision. These elements include water quality/supply infrastructure, Delta habitat protection and restoration, flood control and levees, and others.

Ingredients of a Delta “Fix”: The Governor has identified statewide water policy as a high priority by establishing the Delta Vision Process and the Bay-Delta Conservation Plan. Similarly, the legislative leadership in the California Senate indicates through Senate Bill 27 its intent to make a decision about the Delta using the recent Public Policy Institute of California report (PPIC report) as a framework for decision-making. The PPIC report identifies two categories of alternatives for securing long-term environmental and water supply solutions in the Delta: (1) Fluctuating Delta Alternatives with a fluctuating-salinity Delta and an isolated conveyance fresh-water facility; and (2) Reduced-Export Alternatives that accomplish desired flows and salinity for the aquatic environment through reduced exports. A full analysis of these alternatives is being completed through the Bay-Delta Conservation Plan and Delta Vision process.

MWD analysis of the alternatives indicate that the Fluctuating Delta Alternatives have promising environmental and water supply reliability performance but would require major capital investments in the Delta and would require the support of a statewide coalition of urban, agricultural, environmental, and business interests. The Reduced-Export Alternatives would require lower capital investments in the Delta but would cause a substantial water loss to the State Water Project and Central Valley Project contractors.

In addition to his push for new statewide water policy, the Governor has recently spoken in favor of some kind of peripheral canal, a means for conveying water around the Delta and to the federal and state water systems that bring water to 25 million Californians and more than 700,000 acres of farm land.

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June 28, 2007

TO: *Members of the Water Policy Task Force*

FROM: *Daniel E. Griset, Program Manager, 213.236.1895, griset@scag.ca.gov*

SUBJECT: *A New Water Management Initiative in the Santa Ana River Watershed*

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

SCAG supports the One Water One Watershed initiative led by the Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority.

BACKGROUND:

The One Water One Watershed (OWOW) initiative is a response to conditions that are threatening water supplies and water quality in the Santa Ana River watershed:

- Climate Change that is reducing water supplies at the same time when water needs are increasing in the watershed.
- Uncertainties associated with Colorado River supplies created by the prospects of a long-term drought and entitlement claims of the Upper Basin states.
- Dangers of reduced water supplies from the State Project Water owing to catastrophic levee failure and ecosystem and species declines.
- Lost capacity in the watershed to benefit from natural hydrology and infiltration as land development occurs and population increases lead to greater water needs.

The OWOW is in the process of building a coalition of stakeholders in the watershed to prepare a comprehensive integrated regional water management plan that “builds collaborative support, develops multi-benefit projects, provides a single unified proposal, and secures increased funding to address water resource threats to the watershed.”

This process is a much more comprehensive approach than the one used to bring \$250 million to the watershed from Proposition 13. In that successful effort the funded projects were principally those sponsored by the SAWPA member agencies.

OWOW is organized with a Steering Group and Working Group:

- The Steering Committee is composed of County Supervisors, Mayors, elected water officials and members of the business and environmental community.
- A Working Group will develop plans and solutions with leaders from water agencies,

county governments, universities and non-profit organizations.

As it prepares an integrated water management for the watershed, OWOW will work with and evaluate 10 major elements or “pillars” of water resource management:

1. Water Supply Reliability (including groundwater management, water storage, water conveyance)
2. Water Quality Improvement (including desalination)
3. Flood Control and Stormwater Runoff (including TMDL and NPS pollution control)
4. Water Recycling (including wastewater treatment and collection)
5. Environmental Enhancement and Habitat (including wetlands, forest and wildlife conservation)
6. Water Conservation (including rainwater capture and recharge)
7. Climate Change (including carbon “footprinting” and energy benefits)
8. Land Use (including smart growth, low impact development)
9. Environmental Justice (including perchlorate cleanup, disadvantaged communities)
10. Parks, Recreation, Open Space (including trails)

The financial objective of this new initiative is \$200 million in new state bond funding.

MEMORANDUM TO THE WATER POLICY TASK FORCE

June 28, 2007

TO: *Members of the Water Policy Task Force*

FROM: *Daniel E. Griset, Program Manager, 213.236.1895, griset@scag.ca.gov*

SUBJECT: *Sacramento Legislation Report*

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Consider for future policy action.

BACKGROUND:

Kathy Cole, Chief Sacramento Lobbyist for Metropolitan Water District, will joint the meeting via video teleconference to review pending legislation and other water issues of regional significance. A compendium of proposed legislation is attached to the agenda. Jeff Dunn on SCAG's Legislation staff will also provide input on AB 842 and other bills of direct interest to SCAG.

MEMORANDUM TO THE WATER POLICY TASK FORCE

June 28, 2007

TO: *Members of the Water Policy Task Force*

FROM: *Daniel E. Griset, Program Manager, 213.236.1895, griset@scag.ca.gov*

SUBJECT: *A Preferred Alternative for Restoration of the Salton Sea*

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Consider for future policy action.

BACKGROUND:

After an extended study of alternative proposals for restoring the Salton Sea, the Secretary for Resources announced on May 25, 2007 a Preferred Alternative that reflects a 75 year vision for this ecosystem at an estimated cost of \$8.9 billion. The selection of this alternative was guided by certain directives established by the Legislature beginning in 2002 that called for the protection of fish and wildlife resources by restoring habitat, the elimination of air quality impacts from the restoration project and the protection of water quality. These directives were subject to a standard of “maximum feasible attainment”. The Programmatic Environmental Impact Report that was released in draft form in October, 2006 is expected to be released in Final form sometime this month.

This Preferred Alternative Report is a continuation of a process that began in 2003, shortly after state legislation was passed to facilitate implementation of the historic Quantification Settlement Agreement (QSA). The QSA provides, for a period of 35 to 75 years, a resolution of issues regarding the reasonable and beneficial use of Colorado River water and provides part of the mechanism for California to reduce its use of Colorado River water. The QSA facilitated the water transfers from the Imperial Irrigation District in the Imperial Valley to the San Diego County Water Authority. These transfers are being implemented in accordance with a schedule of farm land water conservation actions and fallowing. The transfers would substantially reduce the irrigation drainage that replenishes the Sea, thereby accelerating the rise in salinity and causing the Sea’s elevation to decline. Of note, the QSA is composed of nearly 30 related agreements that document a multi-faceted compromise among the Imperial Irrigation District, Coachella Valley Water District, San Diego County Water Authority, and Metropolitan Water District.

There were nine alternatives, including the “No Action” alternative. The estimated capital costs for these alternatives range from \$800 million to \$8.9 billion. The estimated annual operation and maintenance costs range from \$48 million to \$142 million. The announced Preferred

Alternative most resembles Alternative 6 below.

Alternatives
1: No Action
2: Saline Habitat Complex I (38,000 acres of Saline Habitat Complex with minimum recirculation facilities and Air Quality Management)
3: Saline Habitat Complex II (75,000 acres of Saline Habitat Complex with brine recirculation and Air Quality Management)
4: Concentric Rings (61,000 acres of Marine Sea in two concentric rings, Air Quality Management , and no Saline Habitat Complex cells)
5: Concentric Lakes (88,000 acres of habitat similar to Saline Habitat Complex in four concentric water bodies as defined by the Imperial Group, with dedicated inflows for Air Quality Management but no long-term facilities)
6: North Sea (62,000 acres of Marine Sea in the northern sea bed, 45,500 acres of Saline Habitat Complex in the southern sea bed, and Air Quality Management)
7: North Sea Combined (74,000 acres of Marine Sea in the northern, western, and southern sea bed; 29,000 acres of Saline Habitat Complex cells in the southern sea bed; and Air Quality Management)
8: Combined North and South Lakes (104,000 acres of Marine Sea in the northern, western, and southern sea bed; 12,000 acres of Saline Habitat Complex cells in the eastern sea bed; water treatment of inflows and water withdrawn from the eastern portion of the northern Marine Sea; and use of Brine Stabilization for Air Quality Management at lower elevations)
9: South Sea Combined (83,000 acres of Marine Sea primarily in the southern sea bed with a smaller Marine Sea in the western and northern sea bed, 18,000 acres of Saline Habitat Complex in the southern sea bed, and Air Quality Management)

SCAG participated in the founding of the Salton Sea Authority (SSA), a joint powers entity that has brought together two county governments, two water districts and one Indian tribe. SSA was formed to work with California state agencies, federal agencies, and the Republic of Mexico to develop programs that would continue beneficial use of the Salton Sea. In the joint powers agreement, "beneficial use" includes the primary purpose of the Sea as a depository for agricultural drainage, storm water and wastewater flows; for protection of endangered species, fisheries and waterfowl; and for recreational purposes.

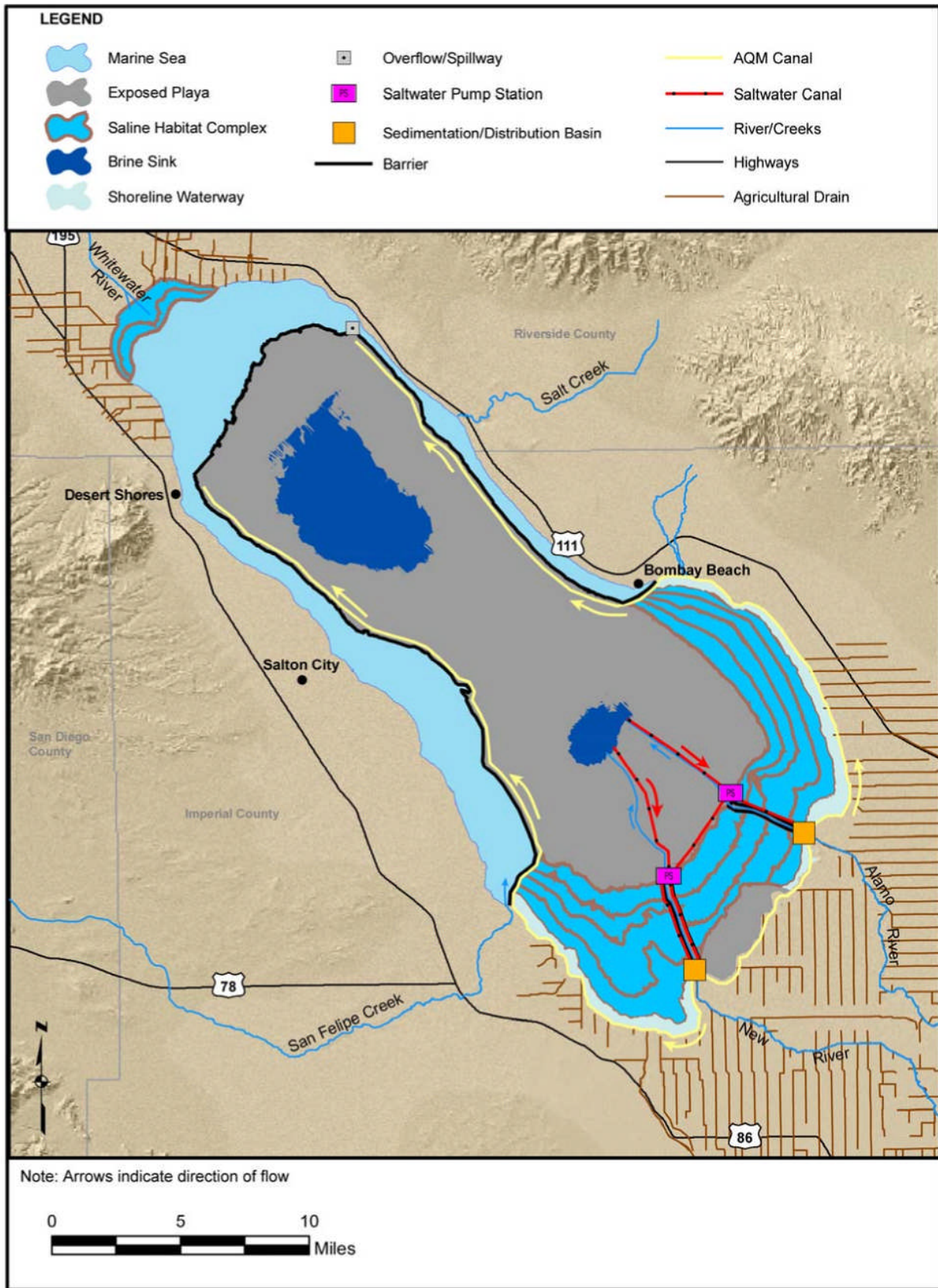
The SSA has advocated for alternative (#X) and wants desires the lead role in any restoration enterprise. The Authority's planning efforts have included financing proposals that seek to raise financing with the capture of tax increments from future development around a restored Sea. Some stakeholders consider commercial and residential development around the Sea with

concern, considering the potentially adverse impacts it would have on the habitat aspects of a restoration effort.

Consistent with the QSA and related agreements, federal and state law, Salton Sea restoration is to be accomplished without increased dependence on the Colorado River. Nonetheless, the interaction of water demands for ecosystem restoration and for municipal water supplies throughout southern California makes the pending policy choices about the Salton Sea a matter of great interest to a growing SCAG region with growing water demands.

Several interesting facts about the Salton Sea:

- It contains 7.3 million acre-feet (MAF) of water
- It evaporates 1.3 MAF of water each year
- The water surface is 227 feet below sea level
- It is only 5 feet higher than the lowest spot in Death Valley



**FIGURE 3
PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE**