



# Salton Sea Authority Board of Directors Meeting

Thursday, October 29, 2020  
10:00 a.m.

Via Zoom Webinar



**AGENDA:** SALTON SEA AUTHORITY  
**BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING**  
**DATE:** Thursday, October 29, 2020  
**10:00 a.m.**  
**LOCATION:** Via Zoom Webinar

*In the interest of public health, and in cooperation with government COVID-19 meeting recommendations, this meeting will be conducted via Zoom Webinar. The public will be able to view the meeting live at 10:00 October 29. Please see the meeting login information at <http://saltonseaauthority.org/ssa-board-of-directors-meeting-17>.*

**I. CALL TO ORDER**  
**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**  
**ROLL CALL**

*A copy of the complete agenda packet is available for viewing or download at:  
<http://saltonseaauthority.org/ssa-board-of-directors-meeting-17/>*

**II. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

*To ensure that members of the public have an opportunity to be heard before the Salton Sea Authority Board pursuant to State Law, a Public Comment period is included at the beginning of every agenda. This Public Comments time is reserved for matters not already on the agenda. Any member of the public may address and ask questions of the Board relating to any matter within the Authority's jurisdiction.*

*Additionally, citizens are invited to comment on any item listed on the agenda, after the presentation of that item. Comments will be read at the presentation of that item.*

*Please email your public comment c/o SSA's Board Secretary at [info@ssajpa.org](mailto:info@ssajpa.org) (subject line "Public Comment, 10/29/20 SSA board meeting"), or hand-deliver your comment, in an envelope addressed to "Board Secretary, Salton Sea Authority" to the security officer at the public defenders' office at 82995 Highway 111, Suite 200, Indio, CA 92201 (downstairs, glass entry next to the statue of justice at the west end of the building) by Wednesday morning, October 28, to be read aloud during the board meeting. A mail slot is available at the above address for dropping off comments before or after office hours.*

*In your comment, please include your name and address (addresses will be redacted), and the agenda item number and topic to which your question or comment applies – or whether it is for this general public comment section. (Anonymous comments will not be read.)*

*The law prohibits members of the Board from taking action on matters not on the agenda.*

*Remarks are limited to a maximum of three (3) minutes unless additional time is authorized by the Board.*

**III. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS**

*This is the time set aside for any Board Member to ask questions or address any issue posed by a member of the public.*

**IV. CONSENT CALENDAR – Receive, Approve, and File**

- A. Minutes of September 17, 2020 Board Meeting
- B. Minutes of October 1, 2020 Special Board Meeting
- C. Warrant Register Ratification for September 2020
- D. Internal Financial Report for: 7/01/2020 – 8/30/2020
- E. Approval of proposed 2021 SSA Board Meeting Schedule

**V. PRESENTATIONS**

- A. “Science be Damned: CII” (overview of historic Colorado River water supply issues)  
– Eric Kuhn, Retired GM, Colorado River Water Conservation District, and John Fleck, Director, Water Resources Program, University of New Mexico

**VI. ACTION ITEMS**

- A. Consideration of approval of Resolution of support for principles of federal partnership at the Salton Sea
- B. Consideration of candidates for nomination to CEC Blue Ribbon Commission on Lithium Extraction
- C. Consideration of approval of Minute Order authorizing SSA GM to draw down Prop 68 funds for North Lake Pilot Project
- D. Leadership recognition of retiring SSA GM/Executive Director Phil Rosentrater

**VII. REPORTS**

- A. General Manager’s Report on Activities – (Phil Rosentrater, GM/Executive Director, Salton Sea Authority)
- B. Standing Reports from Federal and State Partners
  - 1. STATE:
    - a. Salton Sea Management Program – (Arturo Delgado, Assistant Secretary for Salton Sea Policy)
  - 2. FEDERAL:
    - a. US Bureau of Reclamation – (Genevieve Johnson, Program Manager for the Salton Sea)
    - b. Federal Activities – (Lisa Lehman, Partner, Cultivating Conservation)
- C. Salton Sea State Recreation Area Update on Activities – (Steve Quartieri, Acting District Superintendent, California State Parks)

**VIII. CLOSED SESSION**

Government Code Section 54957: Public Employment; Title General Manager

PERSONNEL: Consideration of nomination for temporary General Manager for SSA

**IX. REPORT OUT and ADJOURNMENT**

**NEXT MEETING TIME & LOCATION:**

Thursday, December 17, 2020

10:00 a.m.

Via Zoom

or...

Imperial Irrigation District

Bill Condit Auditorium

1285 Broadway Avenue

El Centro, CA 92243

(760) 482-9618

*Any public record, relating to an open session agenda item, that is distributed within 72 hours prior to the meeting is available for public inspection in the lobby at the front desk of the County Law Building located at 82995 Highway 111, Indio, CA 92201.*



# OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS

## SALTON SEA AUTHORITY

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

#### September 17, 2020

#### **I. CALL TO ORDER**

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Salton Sea Authority (“Authority” or “SSA”) Board of Directors (“Board”) was called to order by Alex Cardenas, President, at 10:04 a.m., Thursday, September 17, via Zoom webinar.

#### **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Director Plancarte led the Pledge of Allegiance

#### **ROLL CALL:**

##### **DIRECTORS PRESENT**

Alex Cárdenas, President  
V. Manuel Perez, Vice-President  
Altrena Santillanes, Treasurer  
Luis A. Plancarte, Secretary  
James C. Hanks, Director  
Ryan E. Kelley, Director  
Cástulo R. Estrada, Director  
G. Patrick O’Dowd, Director  
Jeff Hewitt, Director  
Arturo Delgado, Ex-Officio Member

##### **AGENCY**

Imperial Irrigation District  
Riverside County  
Torres Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians  
Imperial County  
Imperial Irrigation District  
Imperial County  
Coachella Valley Water District  
Coachella Valley Water District  
Riverside County  
California Natural Resources Agency

*In keeping with the Salton Sea Authority Bylaws, there being at least three of the five member agencies represented, and a single Director carrying the vote of both Directors when the second Director of the same agency is absent, a Quorum was declared, and the meeting proceeded.*

##### **DIRECTORS ABSENT**

Thomas Tortez, Director

##### **AGENCY**

Torres Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians

## **SALTON SEA AUTHORITY STAFF PRESENT**

Phil Rosentrater, GM/Executive Director  
Bob Hargreaves, Best Best & Krieger, Legal Counsel

## **MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC PRESENT**

Forty members of the public attended via Zoom webinar

## **II. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

*With the meeting being held remotely via Zoom in cooperation with government COVID-19 meeting recommendations, the public was invited, via pre-meeting email and via posting of the agenda publicly at the office and on the [saltonseaauthority.org](http://saltonseaauthority.org) website, to comment via email or by dropping off their comments at the office.*

- A. Joan Taylor, on behalf of the Tahquitz Group of the Sierra Club, offered their assistance with the public input process; urged the SSA to focus on the deep water/fishery attributes of the North Lake in the pilot project, and to test-build a levee system to capture Whitewater flows into an actual lake.
- B. Michael Cohen, Pacific Institute, asked questions about the North Lake pilot project, boat access ramp project, and TM wetlands project site.
- C. Nikola Lakic, Geothermal World Wide, expressed his opposition to the State's current plan. He has repeatedly advocated for a geothermal water treatment proposal that he says will save and restore the Salton Sea.

Received after deadline (discovered after the meeting):

- D. Jacqueline Lopez submitted a media advisory that three Coachella Valley high school seniors would kayak across the Salton Sea on Saturday, September 26, to raise awareness of the Salton Sea dilemma.
- E. Katie Burnworth, Imperial County Air Pollution Control District (APCD), sent copies of letters that the County APCD had previously submitted to the California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA) during the development of the Dust Suppression Action Plan (DSAP), and had additional comments to make after agenda item V.A CNRA update on the SSMP Dust Suppression Plan.

## **III. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS**

- A. Director Estrada responded to questions by Michael Cohen that one of SSA's biggest tasks right now is to finalize the scope of work, and that scope of work will define schedules and when things will roll out – particularly as it relates to the pilot project.
- B. Director Perez responded that the questions raised in public comments were great questions and he's looking forward to meeting with the public and walking through what, potentially, this project could look like. They will be working with the community on the North Lake pilot project and the EIFD – must start thinking about how to pay for the restoration of the Salton Sea altogether. He assured the community that they don't intend to move forward without their input.

- C. Director O'Dowd thanked Mr. Lakic for his passion and interest in the future successes at the Sea, and said he has great appreciation for Mr. Lakic for the time and effort he spent on pressing his proposal which appears to be creative, but very technical and highly complex. Director O'Dowd said he is not in a place to opine one way or another as to its feasibility. The SSA has historically and will likely continue to work with very limited resources, and a project of Mr. Lakic's scope and scale will take some very creative funding opportunities to make happen, but the State and SSA have both allocated talent to look at some of these large import projects and other projects related to the sea, so he doesn't feel it's fair to say that his project or any other long-term project submitted for such review has been ignored.
- D. Chairman Cardenas – thanked past chairman Estrada for his leadership – many accomplishments during his leadership.

The Chairman announce that the Board would be going into closed session at the end of the public session. At the end of the closed session they would report out any action taken during the closed session as required by law.

He encouraged the public to read the minutes of the July 15 Strategic Planning Meeting as there was quite a bit of consensus in terms of moving forward projects. As regards the Perimeter Lake, SSA has three major supporting projects: Species Conservation Habitat (SCH), North Lake, and the New River Improvement Project. That is the direction the SSA governing body and staff are going. He thanked the directors for their participation and encouraged and welcomed public comment and community engagement.

#### IV. **CONSENT CALENDAR** – Receive, Approve, and File

- A. Minutes of June 25, 2020 SSA Board Meeting
- B. Minutes of July 15, 2020 SSA Strategic Planning Meeting
- C. Warrant Register Ratifications for June, July, and August 2020
- D. Internal Financial Report for 7/01/2019 – 6/30/2020
- E. Internal Financial Report for 07/01/2020-7/31/2020

*Chairman Cardenas invited a motion to approve the Consent Calendar. Director Perez so moved. Seconded by Director Plancarte. Unanimously carried via roll call vote.*

#### V. **PRESENTATIONS**

- A. CNRA update on the SSMP Dust Suppression Plan

Evon Willhoff, Department of Water Resources (DWR) Program Manager 1 and co-lead for implementation of dust suppression projects that are identified within the state's DSAP, introduced her colleague Jacob Kollen, a DWR Water Resources Engineer whose specialty is soil science with a specialization in windblown dust.

Ms. Willhoff gave an overview of their plan and their proposed work, and Mr. Kollen gave an overview of the technical aspects of their program.

Ms. Willhoff said the DSAP, released by the California Natural Resources Agency at the end of July 2020, can be found on the [www.salttonsea.ca.gov](http://www.salttonsea.ca.gov) website (<https://salttonsea.ca.gov/planning/dust-suppression>). The DSAP is a guidance document, not a regulatory document.

The projects are organized into two groups: Phase A (they meet the criteria to be implemented on exposed lakebed, plus less complex permitting and land access) to be started in 2020; and Phase B projects are expected to have more complex permitting, land access, design, and infrastructure, and are to be planned in 2020 and implemented in 2021 and 2022.

Phase A soil-roughening areas will, in Phase B, have water added for dust suppression and habitat. Phase B will provide habitat restoration benefits beyond the dust suppression benefits.

Mr. Kollen covered: Where do they focus? How do they do the dust suppression? How do they demonstrate that it is working? They are using IID's air quality team's data to determine "hot spots."

Ms. Willhoff gave assurance that the State will continue to collaborate with communities, tribal government, local, state, and federal agencies – especially the air districts, other NGOs, and interested parties. The DSAP is a living document, will be updated annually to reflect the best information available to them at that moment in time.

She invited those who want updates on what the state's doing around the Salton Sea to sign up for their eNewsletter: email [cnra-salttonsea@resources.ca.gov](mailto:cnra-salttonsea@resources.ca.gov) to sign up.

The presentation was followed by a question and answer discussion period with the board, and included public comment by Katie Burnworth, Imperial County APCD, on behalf of Matt Desert, citing three main issues:

- The DSAP fails to address the most emissive areas of the playa.
- Surface roughening is not a USEPA- or ICAPCD-approved method of dust control.
- Performance monitoring for the proposed projects is not sufficient to meet ICAPCD standards.

Chairman Cardenas asked Mr. Rosentrater and Mr. Delgado to keep this handy and determine when it would be appropriate to respond to some of those inquiries, and asked the Board how they want to address these?

The Board discussed and determined that since these were questions asked publicly, the answers should be public also. Chairman Cardenas additionally wanted answers in relation to CARB inquiries.

Secretary Plancarte referred to Counsel, who said that the Brown Act doesn't specify how public comments must be answered, but does require that if responses are sent out to the board, that information has to be made available to the public.



- B. Robert McKernan, Oasis Bird Observatory, San Bernardino County Museum, gave a presentation on Net-gain/Net-loss of Shoreline Habitats:

Observations of shoreline changes and bird species richness in the central and north sections of Salton Sea, 2014-2020, showed results of weekly surveys begun in 2014 encompassing nine locations from Salt Creek to Desert Shores.

Looking at habitat trends, the receding shoreline creates some refugia of shore bird and water bird habitat throughout the fall, winter, and spring. Wetlands and playas provide habitat. The various drains that flow into the Sea provide excellent habitat for migratory birds and overwintering birds. In several areas, extensive barnacle beach/bar/pools provide critical habitat for the birds. Some habitat is being created in as few as six months.

In response to Director Hanks' question whether it was important that all drains reach the Sea, Mr. McKernan responded that most do reach the Sea, not all drains need to reach the sea, but that the Hayes, 76<sup>th</sup> and 84<sup>th</sup> are strategically important in their connection to the Sea.

- C. Miguel Figueroa, Calexico Assistant City Manager, gave a presentation on the New River Improvement Plan: Progress in CEQA (California Environmental Quality Act) approvals.

Three infrastructure components identified in the New River Project Improvement Strategic Plan are:

- Trash screen/diversion structure
- Bypass encasement
- Pump-back system/Force main

The City of Calexico is serving as lead agency to finish the CEQA work that was started by Michael Baker International (MBI).

The mitigated negative declaration (MND) and the draft initial study were partially prepared by MBI, as well as initial pre-application consultations with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, the Regional Water Quality Control Board (Colorado Basin Region 7 office), and the US Army Corps of Engineers. The City of Calexico has completed the steps that precede final regulatory permitting and will contact these agencies for further discussion regarding steps to move forward with these permits.

There is a need for a water disinfection facility to be added to the New River Improvement Plan.

- D. Presentation of leadership recognition plaque to past chairman Director Castulo Estrada.

Chairman Cardenas introduced this presentation, referring the directors and the public to the memo where "a host of community wins" under the leadership of past chairman Estrada are recorded – "a tremendous community score card."

The Chairman invited board member comments, and several lauded prior chairman Estrada and the accomplishments under his leadership.

## VI. ACTION ITEMS

### A. Consider Appointments to Ad Hoc Committees

The *ad hoc* committees proposed by the president were:

- ❖ Executive: Chair – President Cardenas; member Vice-President Perez
- ❖ Finance: Chair – Treasurer Santillanes; members Secretary Plancarte, Director O’Dowd
- ❖ Personnel: Chair – Secretary Plancarte; members President Cardenas, Directors Torte and Estrada
- ❖ Projects Committee: Chair – President Cardenas, Vice-Chair Perez; members directors Hanks, Estrada, and Kelley

Chairman Cardenas invited comment regarding the appointment of any of the committees.

Director O’Dowd suggested that there might be opportunities for other committees to assist staff in carrying out their work. Two possible areas: legislative affairs, dealing with what’s going on in Sacramento and in D.C., and communications and outreach.

*Director O’Dowd **moved** to approve the ad hoc committee recommendations as presented. **Seconded** by Director Santillanes.*

President Cardenas invited Vice President Perez to initiate comment regarding Director O’Dowd’s suggestion to add two more committees. Following discussion, President Cardenas suggested that the executive committee discuss it and present a suggestion to the board.

*The vote proceeded and **unanimously carried** via roll call vote. (Director Hanks was not able to be present for the vote, but Chairman Cardenas, in keeping with the Salton Sea Authority Bylaws, was authorized to carry the vote of both directors in the absence of the second director of the same agency.)*

## VII. REPORTS

### A. General Manager’s Report on Activities

Phil Rosentrater, GM/Executive Director, Salton Sea Authority, invited board inquiry or comment regarding his written report submitted in the board packet, offered to address some of the questions raised during public comment, and commented on progress on the scope and budget of the North Lake Pilot Project, and on the New River project.

Supervisor Perez took this opportunity to read aloud a media advisory he had received from Ms. Jackie Lopez regarding Coachella Valley students taking on the Salton Sea – kayaking across the Salton Sea on Saturday, September 26, and traveling to Sacramento and DC to raise awareness regarding the Salton Sea.

Mr. Rosentrater referred back to comments and questions about air quality in the discussions and assured that the SSA is committed to making sure that the board and

public are well informed on the status of proposals and projects in those areas and will be cooperating with SSA's state counterparts – Arturo Delgado and his team – to make sure that happens.

## B. Standing Reports from Federal and State Partners

### 1. STATE:

#### a) Salton Sea Management Program

Gail Sevens, Salton Sea Program Manager, California Dept. of Fish & Wildlife, reported that the governor's budget included 10 new position authorizations for the Salton Sea. Eight of those ten will be located locally: two new positions for the Department of Fish and Wildlife, two for CNRA, and six for DWR. They are also working on a temporary local office at the Wister Wildlife Area (California Department of Fish & Wildlife existing facility) – located near several projects they are working on.

#### b) State Advocacy Report

Oracio Gonzalez, Principal, Ollin Strategies, reported that on August 31 the legislator/legislature adjourned for the year without accomplishing much on the climate resiliency bond or the stimulus program to aid the parts of the state that were really hurt during the downturn in the economy. They still expect a resiliency bond to be released at the start of next year, and to that end they remain very close to Assemblyman Garcia to be sure the needs of the Salton Sea remain central to that bond. If the governor accelerates the state's climate goals and policies, to the extent the renewable energy portfolio standard is accelerated, that would be an opportunity to ensure that geothermal in the Salton Sea area is properly taken into account as the RPS (renewable portfolio standard) is being developed.

### 2. FEDERAL:

#### a) US Bureau of Reclamation (BOR)

Genevieve Johnson, BOR's Program Manager for the Salton Sea, was present but had no report.

#### b) Federal Activities

Lisa Lehman, Partner, Cultivating Conservation, reported that a federal hearing on the Salton Sea was tentatively noticed Sept. 17 for Thursday the 24<sup>th</sup> - one of the last last-minute hearing opportunities for the year - titled: Federal and State Efforts to Restore the Salton Sea. So far only State and Federal representatives are allowed to testify at the hearing which the SSA and member agencies have repeatedly requested over the past two years in order to provide a forum for local voices that were previously denied expression in federal hearings on the Drought Contingency Plan for the Colorado River that would have potentially affected the Salton Sea.

In the letter that Congressman Ruiz and Congressman Vargas sent to the committee asking for this hearing, they pointed out that it is an important

priority for the local stakeholders to present their views to Congress, particularly on the federal role in the Salton Sea. The Resources Committee granted Congressmen Ruiz and Vargas waivers to sit on the Resources Committee for the hearing who, in turn, encouraged the Authority and the individual member agencies to work through them to raise issues that they would like addressed.

Chairman Cardenas paused the report to lead discussion on ways for local voice to be heard. Director Santillanes, of the Torres Martinez Tribe, confirmed that the Tribe would be willing to take lead in petitioning to provide live testimony. Chairman directed the GM of SSA to follow up with Directors Torte and Santillanes, of the Torres Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians, to coordinate petition to the Congressional Committee for the tribe to testify as a sovereign nation and on behalf of the Salton Sea Authority. Each agency, on its part, as well as Salton Sea Authority itself, would additionally submit written testimony.

Chairman then asked Ms. Moore for guidance on how SSA and each agency should go about presenting written testimony. Ms. Moore suggested focus on what the agency would like to see as the federal role. Chairman Cardenas invited each agency to speak. In summary, SSA Directors agreed that SSA staff should coordinate with member agencies to generate written testimony and to support Torres Martinez providing live testimony at this hearing.

C. Salton Sea State Recreation Area Update on Activities

Steve Quartieri, District Superintendent, California State Parks, had to leave for another meeting by this time.

D. Salton Sea Action Committee (SSAC)

Juan DeLara, SSAC President, had to leave for another meeting by this time.

## **VIII. CLOSED SESSION**

Government Code Section 54957: Public Employment; Title General Manager

The chairman adjourned the meeting to closed session at 1:11 p.m.

Closed session adjourned at 2:46.

The board secretary returned to the main meeting, reported out that the board had taken no reportable action during closed session, and adjourned the meeting.

## **IX. ADJOURNMENT**

The board secretary adjourned the meeting at 2:53 p.m.

### **NEXT MEETING TIME & LOCATION:**

~~Thursday, October 22, 2020~~

Now changed to Thursday, October 29, 2020

10:00 a.m. via Zoom webinar



# **OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS**

## **SALTON SEA AUTHORITY**

### **SPECIAL**

### **BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING**

### **October 01, 2020**

#### **I. CALL TO ORDER**

In the absence of Chairman Cardenas, the Special Board Meeting of the Salton Sea Authority (“Authority” or “SSA”) Board of Directors (“Board”) was called to order by Vice Chairman Perez, at 9:04 a.m., October 1, 2020, Via Zoom Webinar.

#### **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Lisa Bravata, Administrative Assistant for the Salton Sea Authority led the Pledge of Allegiance

#### **ROLL CALL**

##### **DIRECTORS PRESENT**

V. Manuel Perez, Vice-Chair  
Luis Plancarte, Secretary  
Thomas Torte, Director  
Cástulo Estrada, Director  
G. Patrick O’Dowd, Director  
Jeff Hewitt, Director  
Ryan E. Kelley, Director  
James Hanks, Director

##### **AGENCY**

County of Riverside  
County of Imperial  
Torres Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians  
Coachella Valley Water District  
Coachella Valley Water District  
County of Riverside  
County of Imperial  
Imperial Irrigation District

*In keeping with the Salton Sea Authority Bylaws, there being at least three of the five member agencies represented, and a single Director carrying the vote of both Directors when the second Director of the same agency is absent, a Quorum was declared, and the meeting proceeded.*

##### **DIRECTORS ABSENT**

Alex Cardenas, President  
Altrena Santillanes, Treasurer

##### **AGENCY**

Imperial Irrigation District  
Torres Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians

## **SALTON SEA AUTHORITY STAFF PRESENT**

Phil Rosentrater, General Manager/ Executive Director  
Bob Hargreaves, Best Best & Krieger, Legal Counsel

## **MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC PRESENT**

Katrina Kline  
Vickie Doyle  
Ian A. Webster  
Alan Pace  
Jim Barrett  
Joan Taylor  
Esmerelda Perez  
Ronald Spears  
William Patterson

## **AGENCY**

Riverside County  
IID  
Project Navigator, Ltd  
Petra-Inc  
CVWD  
Sierra Club  
Riverside County  
CVWD

## **II. CLOSED SESSION**

Government Code Section 54957: Public Employment; Title General Manager

Vice Chair Perez announced that the Board would be adjourning to the SSA Special meeting.

## **III. SUMMARY REPORT AND ADJOURNMENT**

Salton Sea Authority GM/Executive Director, Phil Rosentrater, reported to Lisa Bravata, Administrative Assistant to the Salton Sea Authority, that there was no action taken. Lisa Bravata rejoined the Board meeting and announced the same to the remaining callers. Meeting was adjourned at 10:13 a.m.

## **NEXT MEETING TIME & LOCATION:**

Thursday, October 29, 2020  
10:00 a.m.  
Via Zoom Webinar

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## Checking Account Activity

September 1, 2020 through September 30, 2020



Warrant	Warrant	Vendor	
Date	Number	Name	Amount
Beginning Cash			\$ 625,782.70
09/03/2020	EFT	Pitney Bowes	(10.00)
09/16/2020	EFT	Pitney Bowes	(88.09)
09/16/2020	EFT	AMEX Payment	(2,099.26)
09/16/2020	EFT	VISA Payment	(291.85)
09/21/2020	1147	Best, Best & Krieger	(7,056.00)
09/21/2020	1148	Cultivating Conservation	(7,000.00)
09/21/2020	1149	Eide Bailly LLP	(3,172.70)
09/21/2020	1150	OfficeTeam	(9,639.40)
09/21/2020	1151	Phil Rosentrater	(606.10)
09/21/2020	1152	SystemGo IT LLC	(1,229.08)
09/22/2020	1153	OfficeTeam	(1,836.00)
09/22/2020	1154	Ollin Strategies	(5,000.00)
09/22/2020	1155	Riverside County	(75,000.00)
09/22/2020	Deposit	CVMC Grant Receipt - June	12,089.99
09/23/2020	EFT	Verizon Wireless	(260.26)
09/23/2020	Deposit	CVMC Grant Receipt - May	7,077.92
09/23/2020	Deposit	CVMC Grant Receipt - July	5,626.40
09/23/2020	Deposit	CVMC Grant Receipt - April	18,154.44
Net Activity			(70,339.99)
Ending Cash			\$ 555,442.71

**Salton Sea Authority**  
**Statement of Revenues, Expenditures, and Fund Balance**  
**(Unaudited)**

Year to Date through August 31, 2020

	General Fund	NSBYC Grant	TOTAL
<b>1 INCOME</b>			
2 Local Government/Member Assessments	\$ 549,000	\$ -	\$ 549,000
3 Grant Funding	-	15,441	15,441
4 State of California Grants	-	-	-
5 Pooled Cash Allocated Interest	-	-	-
6 Miscellaneous Revenue	11	-	11
7 <b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>549,011</b>	<b>15,441</b>	<b>564,453</b>
<b>8 EXPENSE</b>			
9 SSA Administration			
10 Salaries			
11 Salaries - GM / Executive Director	36,033	-	36,033
12 Grant Support	13,586	-	13,586
13 Executive Director Support	2,361	-	2,361
14 Admin Support A	11,347	-	11,347
15 Admin Support B	9,109	-	9,109
16 <b>Total Salaries</b>	<b>72,437</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>72,437</b>
17 Employee Benefits			
18 Employee Benefits - GM / Exec. Dir.	14,775	-	14,775
19 Employee Benefits - Other SSA Staff	12,664	-	12,664
20 <b>Total Employee Benefits</b>	<b>27,439</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>27,439</b>
21 Audit/Accounting	4,415	206	4,622
22 Contract Attorney	16,632	-	16,632
23 Equipment Maintenance	1,410	-	1,410
24 Capital Equipment	-	-	-
25 Equipment Lease	-	-	-
26 Insurance	2,324	-	2,324
27 Office Expense/Operating Supplies	696	-	696
28 Office Expense/Online Services	292	-	292
29 Postage, Mail	484	-	484
30 Printing Services	-	-	-
31 Dues, Subscriptions	2,075	-	2,075
32 Communications	606	-	606
33 Travel/Mileage	5,308	-	5,308
34 Technical Support - Consultant	-	-	-
35 Technical Support - Engineering	-	-	-
36 Technical Support - General	-	-	-
37 Contract Services / Website	-	-	-
38 Technical Support - Environmental	-	-	-
39 Technical Support - Fiscal	-	-	-



**Salton Sea Authority**  
**Statement of Revenues, Expenditures, and Fund Balance**  
**(Unaudited)**

Year to Date through August 31, 2020

	General Fund	NSBYC Grant	TOTAL
40 <b>Communications &amp; Outreach</b>	-	-	-
41 <b>Utilities</b>	-	-	-
42 <b>Grants &amp; Advocacy</b>	30,406	-	30,406
43 <b>Project Manager</b>	-	-	-
44 <b>Total SSA Administration</b>	164,524	206	164,731
45 <b>Wetlands Grant Administration</b>			
46 <b>Contract Services/Attorney</b>	-	-	-
48 <b>Total Wetlands Grant Administration</b>	-	-	-
49 <b>Wetlands Grant Technical</b>			
50 <b>Contract Services/LCP</b>	-	-	-
51 <b>Contract Services/Construction</b>	-	-	-
52 <b>Transfer In/Out Grant Administration</b>	-	-	-
53 <b>Total Wetlands Grant Technical</b>	-	-	-
54 <b>North Shore Grant</b>			
55 <b>EDA Salaries</b>	-	6,827	6,827
56 <b>Grant Expenses - Contractors</b>	-	8,408	8,408
57 <b>Total North Shore Grant</b>	-	15,235	15,235
58 <b>TOTAL EXPENSE</b>	164,524	15,441	179,966
59 <b>NET INCOME</b>	<b>\$ 384,487</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ 384,487</b>

*\*No assurance is provided on these financial statements. The financial statements do not include a statement of cash flows. Substantially all disclosures required by accounting principles generally accepted in the U.S. are not included.*

# Salton Sea Authority

## Balance Sheets

(Unaudited)

As of August 31, 2020

	General Fund	702 Fish Clean Up Trust	NSBYC Grant	TOTAL
<b>1 ASSETS</b>				
<b>2     Checking/Savings</b>				
3         Cash - PW Checking	\$ 537,935	\$ 20,991	\$ 66,251	\$ 625,177
4         Cash - RivCo Fund	29,797	-	(4,768)	25,030
5         RivCo investment fund	4,983	-	-	4,983
6         Cash - Petty Cash	153	-	-	153
7 <b>Total Checking/Savings</b>	<b>572,868</b>	<b>20,991</b>	<b>61,483</b>	<b>655,343</b>
<b>8     Other Current Assets</b>				
9         Due from Grant Funds	2,759	-	-	2,759
10        Interest Receivable	71	-	-	71
11        Prepaid Items	13,451	-	-	13,451
12        Grant Receivable	-	-	52,764	52,764
13 <b>Total Other Current Assets</b>	<b>16,281</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>52,764</b>	<b>69,045</b>
<b>14 TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>589,150</b>	<b>20,991</b>	<b>114,247</b>	<b>724,388</b>
<b>15 LIABILITIES &amp; EQUITY</b>				
<b>16     Liabilities</b>				
<b>17       Current Liabilities</b>				
18         Accounts Payable	3,173	-	-	3,173
<b>19       Credit Cards</b>				
20         Credit Card Payable (Visa)	237	-	-	237
21         Credit Card Payable (AE)	4,981	-	-	4,981
22 <b>Total Credit Cards</b>	<b>2,368</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2,368</b>
<b>23       Other Current Liabilities</b>				
24         Accrued Expenditures	-	-	-	-
25         Accrued Payroll	26,532	-	-	26,532
26         Due to BOR	(68,450)	-	68,450	-
27         Due to EDA for NSBYC Grant	-	-	44,180	44,180
28         Accrued Vacation	15,725	-	-	15,725
29 <b>Total Other Current Liabilities</b>	<b>(26,192)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>115,389</b>	<b>89,197</b>
30 <b>Total Current Liabilities</b>	<b>(20,652)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>115,389</b>	<b>94,738</b>
31 <b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>(20,652)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>115,389</b>	<b>94,738</b>
<b>32     Equity</b>				
33         Fund Balance	225,315	20,991	(1,143)	245,163
34         Net Income	384,487	-	-	384,487
35 <b>Total Equity</b>	<b>609,802</b>	<b>20,991</b>	<b>(1,143)</b>	<b>629,650</b>
<b>36 TOTAL LIABILITIES &amp; EQUITY</b>	<b>\$ 589,150</b>	<b>\$ 20,991</b>	<b>\$ 114,247</b>	<b>\$ 724,388</b>



**2021 MEETING SCHEDULE**  
**SALTON SEA AUTHORITY**  
**BOARD of DIRECTORS**  
**10:00 a.m.**

**January 28**

Coachella Valley Water District

**July 22**

No Meeting

**February 25**

Imperial Irrigation District

**August 26**

No Meeting

**March 25**

Coachella Valley Water District

**September 23**

Coachella Valley Water District

**April 22**

Imperial Irrigation District

**October 28**

Imperial Irrigation District

**May 27**

Coachella Valley Water District

**November 25**

No Meeting

**June 24**

Imperial Irrigation District

**December 16**

Coachella Valley Water District

**Location Addresses**

**Coachella Valley Water District**

Steve Robbins Administration Building  
75515 Hovley Lane East  
Palm Desert, CA 92260  
(760) 398-2651

**North Shore Yacht Club**

99155 Sea View Dr.  
Mecca, CA 92254  
(760) 393-0602

**Imperial Irrigation District**

Bill Condit Auditorium  
1285 Broadway Avenue  
El Centro, CA 92243  
(760) 482-9618

**Salton Community Services District**

1209 Van Buren Avenue, Suite 1  
Salton City, CA 92274  
(760) 394-4446

# Memorandum

**To:** Salton Sea Authority Board of Directors  
**From:** Phil Rosentrater, GM/Executive Director  
**Date:** October 29, 2020  
**Re:** Resolution for Principles for Federal Partnership at Salton Sea  
**CM No.** VI.A – 10-29-2020

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## GENERAL:

The Salton Sea Authority (SSA) continues to abide by its Board-approved Guiding Principles that call for the SSA to “Assert Local Leadership” in matters pertaining to recovery of the Salton Sea in partnership with the state and federal governments that also share responsibilities in and around the Sea, and to do so in a manner that efficiently integrates multiple solutions to address overlapping layers of challenges.

Though the SSA and its partner agencies lived up to every agreement, with the SSA largely succeeding in delivery of plans and projects on time and under budget, a healthy and more prosperous Salton Sea cannot emerge through unilateral action by any of the SSA members alone. The SSA has found that whenever its members remain united and cooperative, progress can occur in achieving the shared objectives of the membership.

Even more so, when the state of California aligns with the SSA in cooperation and consultation on matters of Salton Sea planning to protect human health, restore habitat and revitalize economic opportunities in renewable energy and recreation, the prospects for success are greatly improved. The Board of Directors for the Salton Sea Authority, in the Strategic Planning workshops held in the past year, also recognize that this growing state-local partnership is providing new opportunities for productive federal partnerships that can help the federal government fulfill its obligations in a more efficient and sustainable manner than previously conceived. The SSA Board in its strategic planning activities, has further recognized that these positive prospects for federal participation will not be realized without the assertion of local leadership at SSA in concert with the state of California.

For decades, the locals have witnessed the promulgation of various Agreements between the SSA’s state and federal partners, while the only agreement in net effect until recent years was that the state and federal partners agreed to ignore their responsibilities, hoping to avoid threats rising from the Sea rather than pursuing opportunities for recovery to be gained through cooperation and consultation.

Thankfully the trend of inaction has turned around with the state acceptance of empirical performance measures for compliance with requirements of the Quantitative Settlement Agreement (defined in a Stipulated Order adopted in late 2017), and followed by a series of state bond initiatives that direct funding to the Salton Sea to meet the lion’s share of state costs associated with a first ten year phase of projects known as the Salton Sea Management Plan. State and SSA entities still have a long way to

go, but the plans and projects are finally moving forward, and the Legislative directive in AB 71 (Perez) for the state to cooperate and consult with the SSA on matters of Sea restoration is now being fulfilled.

At the federal level, the SSA has successfully identified a host of solutions in existing programs and funding vehicles that offer renewed opportunities for the federal government – which owns nearly 40% of the land in and around the Sea, and holds numerous public trust responsibilities – to partner with the state, SSA and tribes for the mutual benefit of all concerned. In addition to supporting authorizations in Army Corps and Bureau of Reclamation budgets, every member of the SSA Board of Directors endorsed a plan to secure policy and appropriations support for new funding sources at EPA and USDA that could enable the federal government to participate in a reasonable share of progress on SSMP projects at the Salton Sea that are now underway.

The SSA's approach is strongly supported by California's state legislators, the Governor and Congressional delegation who understand that the strategies endorsed by the SSA Board of Directors provides a proportionate set of solutions to allow the federal government to engage with state and local partners in reasonably managing the mounting human health degradation, ecosystem collapse and economic despair that will become the most reckless and costly of all outcomes if a "No Action" approach remains status quo.

To their credit, the Department of Interior acknowledges, in its current federal budget documents, the significant financial challenges facing federal responsibilities at the Salton Sea. The SSA Guiding Principles suggest that these challenges are most effectively dealt with in an integrated manner, through cooperative planning and consultation with state and local partners. Rather than develop yet another set of plans for federal involvement, the SSA suggests that the State's Stipulated Order provides a path to define milestones for this success, and opportunities for investment where all parties can reap the shared benefits of investment without assuming the entire cost or risk.

It is in this genuine spirit of cooperation for a positive, shared management plan for the Sea that the SSA Board of Directors unanimously endorsed a statement of testimony for the first Congressional hearing on the Salton Sea since 1997. The testimony was delivered by the Chairman of the Torres Martinez Band of Desert Cahuilla, a SSA member agency, and no stranger to more than a century of unkept federal promises to the tribe.

As follow-up to the Sept 24, 2020 Congressional Hearing on the Salton Sea, and in recognition of the DOI recognition that financial solutions are needed to address federal obligations at the Sea, the SSA offers a Resolution providing a statement of condition and a set of principles for federal partnership at the Salton Sea that chart a path to reasonable, actionable and beneficial outcomes for all concerned.

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

SSA staff recommends that the Board of Directors of the Salton Sea Authority approve SSA Resolution No. 20-04 expressing support for the Principles for Federal Partnership at the Salton Sea.

Respectfully submitted,

Phil Rosentrater, GM/Executive Director



**SALTON SEA AUTHORITY  
RESOLUTION NO. 20-04**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF  
THE SALTON SEA AUTHORITY**

**PRINCIPLES REGARDING FEDERAL OBLIGATIONS AT THE SALTON SEA**

**WHEREAS**, the Salton Sea Authority (SSA) is a Joint Powers Authority comprised of Imperial County, Riverside County, Coachella Valley Water District, Imperial Irrigation District, and Torres Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians;

**WHEREAS**, SSA is charged with protecting the public health, environment and economic vitality of the Salton Sea and surrounding region;

**WHEREAS**, in keeping with this mission, SSA develops Salton Sea restoration plans and projects, secures funding for and manages restoration projects, and advocates for state and federal policies to ensure the protection of the Salton Sea;

**WHEREAS**, since the early 2000s, inflows to the Salton Sea have been diminished as a result of significant local water conservation efforts that have greatly benefitted the water supply security of the seven-state Colorado River Basin region;

**WHEREAS**, these conservation efforts and drought have had significant negative effects on the Salton Sea and the surrounding community, exposing Salton Sea playa, contributing to serious air quality and public health concerns, doubling Salton Sea salinity levels, and threatening the Salton Sea with ecological collapse;

**WHEREAS**, the public health impacts from Salton Sea playa exposure disproportionately impact minority communities in the immediate vicinity of the Sea, which are burdened with the highest rates of asthma and respiratory disease in California;

**WHEREAS**, weather events occasionally transport wind-blown gasses and particles from the Salton Sea all the way to the Los Angeles airshed, impacting the health and well-being of tens of millions of residents;

**WHEREAS**, the federal government has major responsibilities and interests in the Salton Sea and surrounding region;

**WHEREAS**, the U.S. Department of the Interior (Interior) owns roughly 40 percent of the Salton Sea which serves as a vital resting stop for the international Pacific Flyway, including the 35,000-acre Sonny Bono National Wildlife Refuge at the Salton Sea's south end;

**WHEREAS**, the Torres Martinez Desert Cahuilla reservation occupies 24,000 acres in and around the Salton Sea at the north end, and Interior has tribal trust responsibilities to protect these tribal lands, assets and resources — federal obligations the Supreme Court has described as “moral obligations of the highest responsibility and trust”;

**WHEREAS**, the U.S. Department of the Defense (Defense) manages the 357-square mile Chocolate Mountain Aerial Gunnery Range located directly to the east of the Salton Sea, which is one of the most heavily used and important aerial gunnery ranges in the West used by the Marines and Navy;

**WHEREAS**, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) is the lead permitting authority for Salton Sea management, and has been directed by Congress to develop Salton Sea restoration projects in 2007 and 2016;

**WHEREAS**, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has developed conservation pilot projects in the Salton Sea region, and has been provided significant new financial resources and authority by Congress in the 2018 Farm Bill to expand this work;

**WHEREAS**, in a 2016 Memorandum of Understanding with the State of California, Interior pledged to develop a cross-agency federal Salton Sea task force, to develop a cross-agency federal funding plan, and to devote increased financial assistance to Salton Sea management, but failed to fulfill these commitments;

**WHEREAS**, Interior was directed in the 2018 Energy and Water Appropriations law to fulfill these commitments, but again failed to do so;

**WHEREAS**, the Fiscal Year 2021 Trump administration budget for Interior estimates a \$332.5 million federal cost to mitigate air quality impacts from exposed federal Salton Sea lands, and a \$4.5 million annual operations and maintenance cost associated with that mitigation — both estimates based upon Owens Lake mitigation costs which underestimate the costs of complying with state and local air quality regulations applicable at the Salton Sea;

**WHEREAS**, the Secretary of the California Natural Resources Agency recently testified to Congress that significant federal funding on par with state funding is required to address federal responsibilities at the Salton Sea and to expeditiously implement Salton Sea management projects to address the public health and environmental crisis.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT:** the Board of Directors of the Salton Sea Authority support the following principles regarding federal obligations at the Salton Sea:

- (1) Interior should be mandated in federal law to provide funding and Salton Sea acreage management to equally match State of California Salton Sea funding and acreage management obligations;
- (2) Interior should be required to coordinate with the State of California and SSA in discharging this obligation, and ensure that federal funding and activities implement locally developed and supported solutions to Salton Sea management;
- (3) Interior should be required to convene a Salton Sea Management Council of the federal agencies with interests at the Salton Sea, including the Corps, USDA, the Environmental Protection Agency, and Defense, to develop a federal funding plan and to expedite permitting of Salton Sea management projects and activities;
- (4) Interior and USDA should be required to coordinate in the creation of a USDA Salton Sea Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program or similar USDA initiative to provide for air quality measures and habitat restoration on exposed Salton Sea playa in furtherance of meeting a mandatory federal Salton Sea acreage management and funding obligation;
- (5) Interior should be required to ensure that federal or regional agreements modifying the management or operation of Colorado River Basin storage reservoirs comply with federal and state law, including environmental laws and state water law, and ensure that such agreements or modifications minimize public health and environmental impacts to the Salton Sea and surrounding region as required by federal law;
- (6) Interior should be required to ensure that where such impacts to the Salton Sea from federal or regional agreements concerning the operation or management Colorado River Basin water storage reservoirs are unavoidable, the mitigation of such impacts shall be undertaken in advance by the Federal government in consultation with the State of California and SSA, and the costs of such mitigation shall be borne by the Federal government, not state or local governments.
- (7) Any federal management or mitigation relating to the Salton Sea must meet federal, state and local public health and environmental laws and regulations and State of California Salton Sea Management Program objectives.

---

Alex Cardenas, President  
Salton Sea Authority



STATE OF CALIFORNIA     )  
  ) ss.  
SALTON SEA AUTHORITY    )

I, Luis A Plancarte, Secretary of the Board of Salton Sea Authority, a Joint Powers Agency of the State of California, do hereby attest that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of Resolution No. 20-04 adopted by the Board of Directors of said Salton Sea Authority at a regular meeting thereof duly held and convened on the 29th day of October 2020, at which meeting a quorum of said Board was present and acting throughout.

Dated this 29<sup>th</sup> day of October 2020.

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Luis A. Plancarte, Secretary  
Salton Sea Authority

# Memorandum

**To:** Salton Sea Authority Board of Directors  
**From:** Phil Rosentrater, GM/Executive Director  
**Date:** October 29, 2020  
**Re:** Consideration of candidates for nomination to CEC Blue Ribbon Commission on Lithium Extraction  
**CM No.** VID- 10-29-2020

## **GENERAL:**

The following nominees were recommended by SSA Directors for consideration of appointment to the following seats on the CEC Lithium Commission:

- (4) A member, appointed by the commission, who represents the lithium extraction industry.
  - Vince Signorotti, Vice President, Resource and Real Estate Assets, Energy Source
- (5) A member appointed by the Speaker of the Assembly.
- (6) A member appointed by the Senate Committee on Rules.
- (7) A member, appointed by the commission, who represents a national vehicle manufacturer organization.
- (8) A member, appointed by the commission, who represents a local environmental organization.
- (9) A member, appointed by the commission, who represents a local city or county government in the Salton Sea geothermal resource area.
  - Ryan Kelley, Supervisor, Imperial County
- (10) A member, appointed by the commission, who represents a local public electric utility.
  - James C. Hanks, Director, Imperial Irrigation District
- (11) A member, appointed by the commission, from a local community group that represents disadvantaged and low-income communities in the Salton Sea geothermal resource area.
- (12) A member, appointed by the commission, who represents a local tribal community.
  - Councilman Art Lopez, Jr., Tribal Council Member, Torres Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians
  - Altrena Santillanes, Secretary, Torres Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians
- (13) A member, appointed by the commission, with knowledge of economics and the effectiveness of local, state, and federal incentives.

## **RECOMMENDATION:**

The Salton Sea Authority Staff recommends that the Salton Sea Authority Board of Directors approve the proposed candidates for nomination to the CEC Blue Ribbon Commission on Lithium Extraction and submit their names for consideration.

Respectfully submitted by Phil Rosentrater, GM/Executive Director



# IID

*A century of service.*

www.iid.com

*Since 1911*

October 12, 2020

Phil Rosentrater, Executive Director  
Salton Sea Authority  
82-995 Hwy 111, Suite 200  
Indio, CA 92201

**Re: AB 1657 (E. Garcia) Blue Ribbon Commission on Lithium Extraction**

Dear Mr. Rosentrater:

AB 1657 by Assemblymember Garcia establishes the 14 member Blue Ribbon Commission on Lithium Extraction in California, to explore the lithium and geothermal opportunities in our state. As a publicly owned utility with significant geothermal and lithium resources in its service area, the Imperial Irrigation District recommends to the Salton Sea Authority to support IID Board Director James C. Hanks to fill the local POU seat on said Commission.

Director Hanks has been an active member of the Salton Sea Authority and tireless advocate for our region. Furthermore, as you know, IID's service area includes the Salton Sea Known Geothermal Resource Area, which has operating geothermal facilities, approximately 2,000 megawatts of untapped geothermal potential and an opportunity to extract lithium from geothermal brine via closed-looped systems. Together, these resources can help the state meets its electric vehicle goals and help with the reliability and resiliency of the grid through geothermal development.

With Governor Newsom's recent executive order requiring sales of all new passenger vehicles to be zero-emission by 2035 coupled with the recent outages that affected the State, IID feels strongly that the resources aforementioned are critical to help that state achieve its next phase of climate and energy goals. Conversely, the knowledge and understanding of these issues by IID Director Hanks can be of significant value to the Commission.

Thank you for the work you have done on behalf of the Salton Sea. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Enrique B. Martinez  
General Manager

# Memorandum

**To:** Salton Sea Authority Board of Directors  
**From:** Phil Rosentrater, GM/Executive Director  
**Date:** October 29, 2020  
**Re:** Consideration of Minute Order between the Salton Sea Authority and California Department of Water Resources for authorization to draw down Proposition 68 funding to implement North Lake Pilot Demonstration Project  
**CM No. VI.C – 10-29-2020**

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## **BACKGROUND:**

In keeping with the expectations of the voters of California who approved \$200 Million in general obligations funds for implementation of SSMP projects to improve the Salton Sea, and in keeping with state fulfillment of legal and contractual obligations at the Salton Sea, the SSA has approached the California Natural Resources Agency to seek expedited release of specific portions of this fund directly to the SSA as provided in the bond and approved by California voters.

The Salton Sea Authority (SSA) intends to follow the letter and spirit of laws governing shared project planning and implementation at the Sea. Allocation of the funds are consistent with California voter approvals of funding to be allocated to the Salton Sea Authority in the amount of \$30 million from Proposition 68.

The proposed budget allocation to the SSA is consistent with state law (AB 71 – Perez) requiring the CNRA to “coordinate and consult with the Salton Sea Authority” on matters pertaining to the Salton Sea restoration activities. The SSA is a joint powers authority empowered to work in consultation and cooperation with the State of California Natural Resources Agency to restore the Salton Sea.

The legislature and governor approved a budget this year that authorizes state funding (approx. \$30M to SSA as called for in Prop 68) for SSMP projects at the Salton Sea. The budget specifically allocates \$29.25 million to the SSA (includes minimum of \$10 million allocated to improve water quality at the New River) for projects to be coordinated with the California Natural Resources Agency for a 10-Year Plan of the Salton Sea Management Program. \$19.25 million of this amount is to be expended or encumbered by June 30, 2023 on a North Lake Pilot Demonstration project that will fulfill state obligations for deep water habitat and dust suppression projects as defined in the Quantitative Settlement Agreements and Stipulated Order. The North Lake Pilot Demonstration Project is also intended to demonstrate the added value of restoring economic health to this under-served region by creating recreational opportunities.

SSA has previously contracted with CNRA to evaluate the technical and financial feasibility of proposed restoration plans pending final adoption by the legislature. As a result of these arrangements, CNRA entered into a funding agreement with the SSA to achieve a Financial Feasibility Action Plan that serves as the foundation for the SSMP and Perimeter Lake concept widely supported today.

In like manner, as the CNRA has launched major SSMP projects on the southern end of the Sea with the award of design-build contracts for the Species Habitat Conservation (SCH) project on the New River, the next round of project design and preparation for investments anticipated by the State is a balanced effort in the north end of the Sea. The CNRA and SSA, in concert with Riverside County as lead agency for project management, have been working diligently since state budget approval to refine scope of work, budget, tasks and timelines necessary to define the roles and responsibilities in a funding agreement that can advance the project with certainty.

These actions are consistent with SSA board support for development of the Perimeter Lake concept in a manner that meets state objectives in the SSMP, as called for in Proposition 68. This Perimeter Lake concept is supported through official action by both counties, IID, CVWD, every tribe and every city council in both Coachella and Imperial Valleys because it can deliver these benefits of protecting human health and restoring habitat while also reviving economic opportunity for communities that will benefit from a stable shoreline. All of these benefits, especially the protection of human health, restoration of quality habitat and revitalization of aquatic recreation are fundamental to improving the economy of the surrounding areas. **SB 1214: 2004 (Kuehl) Chapter 614** directs the Secretary for Resources to assess the protection of recreational opportunities and the creation of improved local economic conditions around the Sea. However, recreation and economic development would not be considered restoration goals on par with the previously stated goals of protection of human health and wildlife habitat, air quality, and water quality protection. Establishing a recreational deep-water habitat project that creates these benefits – resulting in improved economic value of property plus revenues from sales taxes and other recreational business activity – is consistently identified in SSA financial feasibility analyses to offer a valid financing tool to accomplish robust public-private partnerships that stimulate further infrastructure investment and revenue streams that can reinforce these initial investments and generate financial resources to address long term O&M.

As with prior successful CNRA-SSA partnership efforts, the SSA and its member agencies are committed to work in good faith with the State to deliver these projects on time, on budget and in a manner that will accelerate the fulfilment of the larger shared goals of the SSMP.

While the project plans are progressing to complete scope of work, budget, tasks and timelines to accomplish this mutually desirable result between the CNRA and the SSA, the need for funding at SSA to accelerate these steps toward completion suggests that the State should recognize this progress and take steps to allow expedited release of funds as soon as the State funding agreement with DWR for Proposition 68 funding on this project can be reviewed and finalized by legal counsel and the SSA GM/Executive Director.

By allocating the funds to SSA as requested herein, not merely projects but a visionary and financially sustainable restoration strategy will be launched that will create and maintain a healthy, prosperous Salton Sea.

While CNRA, SSA and partner agencies continue to work diligently to resolve issues related to the scope and budget for the North Lake Pilot Demonstration Project, the CNRA has expressed a desire to support SSA Board authorization of the GM/Executive Director to enter into a funding agreement with the Department of Water Resources in the approximate amount of \$19,250,000 for the implementation of the project on terms acceptable to the President of the Board and Authority Legal Counsel.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Salton Sea Authority staff recommends that the Salton Sea Authority Board authorize the GM/Executive Director to enter into a funding agreement with the California Department of Water Resources to receive a Proposition 68 Local Assistance grant in the approximate amount of \$19,250,000 to implement the SSMP project for a North Lake Pilot Demonstration Project on terms acceptable to the President of the Board and Authority Legal Counsel.

Respectfully,

Phil Rosentrater  
GM/Executive Director

# Memorandum

**To:** Salton Sea Authority Board of Directors  
**From:** Executive Committee, SSA Board of Directors  
**Date:** October 29, 2020  
**Re:** Leadership Recognition of Retiring GM/Executive Director Phil Rosentrater  
**CM No.** VI.D – 10-29-2020

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## **GENERAL:**

Having provided leadership to successfully forge historic consensus on plans to restore the Salton Sea, and hundreds of millions of dollars for new projects to fulfill the first ten year phase of that plan, SSA GM/ Executive Director Phil Rosentrater is retiring from the County of Riverside, and as a result he will also be retiring from service to the SSA.

GM Rosentrater, formally employed by Riverside County as Natural Resources Director, has provided contract management for the SSA since 2015, among his other assignments at the county.

Rosentrater's contributions to the SSA have been focused by guiding principles for the SSA that unify and empower the local leadership at the Salton Sea to work as full partners with the state and federal agencies in developing multi-benefit solutions that address a host of difficult, overlapping challenges at the Salton Sea that impact a broad coalition of stakeholders.

Rosentrater tirelessly promoted multi-agency, integrated multi-benefit strategies at the Salton Sea, resulting in historic support for a Perimeter Lake concept at the Salton Sea endorsed by all SSA member agencies, plus every city council in both Imperial and Coachella Valleys as well as the major tribes. The Perimeter Lake would deploy levies parallel to the shoreline to capture and retain waters flowing into the Salton Sea. The waters would restore habitat, cover otherwise dusty exposed playa, and offer recreational opportunities that can restore economic activity on shore. The economic development, which also strongly supports renewable energy development, is fundamental to strategies that can financially sustain recovery of the Sea long term.

Repeatedly during Rosentrater's tenure, the SSA has asserted local leadership, demonstrated historic consensus, and produced productive partnerships that integrate the needs of all parties. As a result, SSA now is blessed with enormous momentum for positive transformation at the Salton Sea.

## **RECOMMENDATION:**

The SSA Executive Committee recommends that the Board of Directors of the Salton Sea Authority approve SSA Resolution No. 20-03 expressing appreciation and gratitude to GM/Executive Director Phil Rosentrater for his many contributions to the Salton Sea Authority

and the public he has served so diligently, and in extending sincere best wishes to him for continued happiness and success in his future endeavors.

Respectfully submitted,

Alex Cardenas  
President  
SSA Board of Directors

V. Manuel Perez  
Vice President  
SSA Board of Directors





**SALTON SEA AUTHORITY  
RESOLUTION NO. 20-03**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF  
THE SALTON SEA AUTHORITY  
EXPRESSING APPRECIATION AND COMMENDATION TO  
PHIL ROSENTRATER  
UPON HIS RETIREMENT FROM SERVICE TO THE SALTON SEA AUTHORITY**

**WHEREAS**, the Salton Sea Authority (SSA) is a Joint Powers Authority comprised of Imperial County, Riverside County, Coachella Valley Water District, Imperial Irrigation District, and Torres Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians; and

**WHEREAS**, the Salton Sea Authority seeks to protect human health, restore habitat, and revitalize economic opportunities at the Salton Sea; and

**WHEREAS**, the Salton Sea has for decades suffered an overlapping severity of multiple human health, environmental and economic challenges that overwhelm the limited water, funding and human resources available; And efforts to address these complex challenges have, in the past, run afoul of prevailing indifference and occasional discord among key agencies and stakeholders at the Salton Sea;

**WHEREAS**, Phil Rosentrater having gained a reputation, first in the Inland Empire and eventually throughout California and in Washington, DC, as a conscientious peacemaker, honest broker, relentless coalition-builder and successful advocate influencing policy and funding opportunities, was duly recruited by Riverside County Supervisors on the SSA Board to apply these capabilities in service to Riverside County with a host of assignments that also included support for the Salton Sea Authority; and

**WHEREAS**, Phil Rosentrater, in addition to his County responsibilities to oversee the Riverside County Energy Division, Airports Division and various other assignments in the Economic Development Agency, was assigned to serve as executive on loan to the SSA upon the retirement of the former SSA general manager; and

**WHEREAS**, the Salton Sea is an extremely complex environment where Phil Rosentrater has thrived by deploying guiding principles that empower and unite the local leadership, and by recognizing old problems as potential new solutions, and further insisting on thoughtful strategies that integrate economic opportunity and environmental vitality as indispensable partners for a healthier and more prosperous Salton Sea; and

**WHEREAS**, Phil Rosentrater worked diligently with counterparts at the state to clarify the relationship of the SSA with the California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA) in working to

help pass AB 71 (Perez), which requires the CNRA to work in consultation and coordination with the Salton Sea Authority to lead Salton Sea restoration efforts; and

**WHEREAS**, AB 71 (Perez) authorized funding from the Salton Sea Restoration Fund for the Salton Sea Authority to lead a feasibility action plan – a plan eventually adopted by the SSA as the Financial Feasibility Action Plan (FFAP), a living document providing a blueprint to create a smaller but sustainable sea in a manner that is realistic, feasible, affordable, and achievable – that was delivered on time and on budget in cooperation with the CNRA; and

**WHEREAS**, Phil Rosentrater concurrently assumed oversight of the Torres Martinez Wetlands project from his predecessor and thus delivered the first state-funded project to be completed, according to specifications, at the Salton Sea, with the Salton Sea Authority serving as lead agency, working in partnership with the tribe under contract with the State of California to complete the project on time and under budget; and

**WHEREAS**, the Salton Sea Authority, under Phil Rosentrater's leadership, has carefully managed its limited funding and consistently earned the highest marks in annual audits for the agency while securing ever-expanding levels of funding at the state and federal levels; and

**WHEREAS**, Phil Rosentrater has encouraged partners to address the challenges at the Sea in context of enormous opportunities for Enhanced Infrastructure Financing strategies, first as North America's renewable energy powerhouse endowed with the largest and most diverse renewable energy and lithium extraction potential on the continent, plus the tourism potential in light of the Sea's legacy as California's top recreational tourist destination during the zenith of its role as a water sports mecca; and

**WHEREAS**, Phil Rosentrater, from the very first meeting where he was assigned to the role of General Manager, has developed and relentlessly driven the Perimeter Lake concept for the benefit of all parties at the Salton Sea, creating a multi-benefit solution that will effectively address a host of difficult, overlapping challenges at the Salton Sea while creating historic consensus and productive partnerships that integrate the needs of all parties; and

**WHEREAS**, Phil Rosentrater has consistently forged historic consensus on plans, successfully delivered projects on time and under budget, and secured policy changes as well as increasingly large appropriations of state and federal funding necessary to launch the first set of state-funded Salton Sea Management Plan (SSMP) projects at the Salton Sea; and

**WHEREAS**, Phil Rosentrater worked tirelessly to generate unprecedented support for a Perimeter Lake concept at the Salton Sea endorsed by all SSA member agencies, plus every city council in both Imperial and Coachella Valleys as well as the major tribes: The Perimeter Lake concept calling for levies deployed parallel to the shoreline to capture and retain waters flowing into the Salton Sea, thus protecting human health from dust emitted by otherwise exposed playa, restoring habitat, and offering recreational opportunities that can restore economic activity on shore; and

**WHEREAS**, Phil Rosentrater has devoted his energies, experience, knowledge, judgment, diplomacy, professional expertise, political acumen, and time to the SSA; and



# Salton Sea Authority

## ***General Manager/Executive Director Progress Report to the Board of Directors*** October 29, 2020

### **PURPOSE:**

- 1) Provide Salton Sea Authority (SSA) Board of Directors with an executive summary of progress toward essential objectives; and,
- 2) Provide accountability and perspective for staff performance.

### **MISSION-CRITICAL OBJECTIVES FOR SSA (NEXT 6 MONTHS TO 1 YEAR):**

Time is extremely short, funding limited, and staff focus is finite. While the SSA GM/Executive Director is committed to seizing every opportunity, and maximizing Return on Investment (ROI) on every dollar and all time invested, we recognize we cannot do everything in this complex assignment. Accordingly, the following top priority imperatives must be accomplished within this fiscal year:

- **ASSERT LOCAL LEADERSHIP: MAINTAIN LOCAL PRIORITIES IN STATE/FEDERAL PARTNERSHIPS;**
- **INTEGRITY/PERFORMANCE: DEVELOP & DELIVER PROJECTS ON TIME, UNDER BUDGET;**
- **SECURE SIGNIFICANT FUNDING TO IMPROVE CONDITIONS IN/AROUND THE SEA; and,**
- **LAUNCH SELF-HELP REVENUE STRATEGIES: Develop projects and partnerships (local/state/federal & public/private) that will generate new investments/revenues from Enhanced Infrastructure Financing District (EIFD) and Renewable Energy.**

### **LEADERSHIP**

#### ***Administration***

The announcement of the pending retirement of the SSA GM /Exec Director from his position of Natural Resources Director for Riverside County will mean there will be new leadership to administer the managing contracts that have been overseen by Riverside County for decades. The SSA Board of Directors has been working diligently to ensure a smooth transition since announcement of the retirement in September.

The SSA has established considerable momentum to sustain progress for SSA Strategic Planning as well as implementation of first phase projects for the SSMP (New River Improvement Phase I and North Lake Pilot Demonstration) are both fully funded and moving forward with Scope of Work/Budgets/Tasks and Timelines. The SSA is now poised to make a concerted effort to help the federal government address its responsibilities at the Salton Sea in cooperation and consultation with the SSA and State of California.

Among other priorities emerging from the SSA Strategic Planning Workshop, SSA board expressed urgency to accelerate staff and contracting capacity in light of the pending release of state bond funding approved for SSA implementation of SSMP projects at New River and North Lake.

Internally, the SSA has taken steps to strengthen staff capacity for contracting, grant management, environmental compliance, and policy support by securing qualified part time help and internships that are both paid and unpaid. In addition, the SSA has retooled its database and outreach management capabilities in anticipation of the need for more robust communications and community engagement activities.

SSA team continues to accomplish essential work while continuing to build momentum in support of SSA objectives at the Sea despite the COVID-19 limitations resulting in staggered work schedules and adjustments to technical capabilities for SSA staff.

The SSA board meetings continue to be held remotely while SSA staff, consultants and member agency counterparts have continued to coordinate and consult either remotely or in adherence to social distancing regimen in order to reduce risk of exposure to COVID-19.

SSA continues to coordinate interagency meetings – via conference call – for staff at local, state, and federal levels to ensure a unified local voice is maintained in efficient and effective advocacy for funding as well as project implementation.

## **DEVELOP REALISTIC REVITALIZATION STRATEGY**

### *Salton Sea Management Plan (SSMP) / 10-Year Plan / Stipulated Order*

Consistent with state law (AB 71) and the SSA MOU with CNRA, SSA is pursuing cooperation and consultation with the California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA), to implement the SSMP Revitalization Plan for the Salton Sea as defined in the 10-Year Plan.

SSA has engaged in a series of internal coordination meetings between SSA and project partners for the New River Improvement Project (Phase I) and the North Lake Pilot Demonstration project. Project updates are attached to this report. The New River Improvement project is well on its way toward achieving the environmental permitting and compliance reporting needed to transition toward implementation. The coordination work on North Lake Pilot project, spearheaded by Riverside County as lead agency in cooperation with SSA and DWR, has resulted in general agreement on Scope of Work, Budget and Schedule that warrants SSA Board

consideration of approval for Minute Order that will allow the SSA to expedite drawdown of state grant funding as authorized in Prop 68 and defined in funding agreements that are now in final stages of negotiation. This next step will improve cash flow to the implementing agencies, allowing the project to accelerate with minimal delays.

SSA is committed to do its utmost to facilitate local, state and federal success in performance of the Stipulated Order, with the SSMP 10-Year Plan as the first steps prerequisite to maintaining water security in California, in the southwestern US, and in Mexico.

## **PERFORMANCE**

### ***Making good on grants for projects at the Sea***

#### **New River Improvement Project**

Flowing from Calexico into the US and eventually to the southern end of the Salton Sea, the New River is finally gaining serious attention and – with \$28 million recently approved in the state budget – funding that can begin to mitigate dangerous pollution in America’s most polluted river.

SSA staff and consultants are following up with counterparts at CalEPA to confirm state and federal commitment to assess the current and projected conditions of the riverway with the intent to develop long term strategies for a healthier ecosystem.

The SSA Board of Directors, in a letter approved in June, appealed to the Ca Secretary of Resources as well and Secretary for Cal EPA for consideration of a more robust level of treatment and protection for the environment and human health. State bond moneys from Prop 68 provide \$10 M to the SSA as a participant to help implement three key installations as part of the \$28 million state-funded first phase of the Improvement Plan. SSA and state counterparts are discussing best approach to secure additional federal investment to reinforce and accelerate current progress.

Planning and permitting is already well underway for the New River Improvement Plan with the oversight from city of Calexico where the first phase of the project is located. The project is working through its final round of regulatory compliance permitting through CA Dept of Fish & Wildlife, Regional Water Quality Control Board, and Army Corps of Engineers. This work is expected to take six to 12 months to complete. Assuming all goes well, the project may be eligible for construction which is estimated to be completed in 18 months from start.

#### **North Lake Pilot Demonstration Project**

With \$19.25 Million in state funding approved for a North Lake Pilot Demonstration project on the northern portion of the Perimeter Lake at Salton Sea, SSA is coordinating with a working group of agencies to ensure this project provides a multitude of benefits from an investment in integrated planning for deep water recreational habitat: air quality mitigation, habitat restoration and aquatic recreation.

SSA staff are conferring with staff and consultants from CNRA, County of Riverside and CVWD to define the roles/responsibilities among the multi-agency project committee that will need to align with the emerging Scope of Work and Budget for the North Lake Pilot Demonstration project. Additional civil engineering support provided through RivCo TLMA is now in place to assist in developing project task/timelines and deliverables that are part of the draft funding agreement now in final stages of refinement for SSA and CNRA. In keeping with discussions among NGO stakeholders, a strong community engagement component is also under development as part of the draft budget and SOW. A summary of technical progress on this project development is included as an attachment to this report.

#### **Research Vessel Access to Sea for mandated activity: North Shore Harbor Rehabilitation**

The North Shore Yacht Club is a highly desirable option for restoration of Sea access. Currently, there are no access options for research vessels to launch as a means to fulfill state and federally mandated monitoring and reporting activities.

The North Shore Yacht Club offers optimal access and a combination of amenities for this purpose found nowhere else around the Sea: safe and swift public access via state highway; an attractive, historically significant landmark facility offering clean restrooms, running water, air-conditioned meeting areas and ample parking. In addition to the existing launch ramp and marina with a short fetch to the open Sea, the Yacht Club grounds feature an architectural attraction with picnic areas offering unparalleled views of the vast Salton Sea.

SSA, with property owner Riverside County, duly coordinated and consulted with state and federal agencies as well as a critical local partner - the Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy - to develop budget and scope for the project to re-establish research vessel access needed for state and federal agencies to fulfill their mandated responsibilities. Staff from US Bureau of Reclamation, State Dept of Water Resources and Coachella Valley Mtns Conservancy are working diligently with SSA and Riverside County (property owner) to clean up and re-open the marina in order to meet the critical need for federal and state research vessels that are mandated to sample, monitor and report environmental conditions in the water and wildlife at the Sea.

The immediate goal of the project is to restore accessible boat launching to the Salton Sea for public agencies that must work on the Sea. There is potential, with other added investments, to improve public access to the Sea for local communities and tourists who wish to experience the Salton Sea by either boat or from safe, accessible picnic viewing areas on public land and facilities located at the historic North Shore Yacht Club. The restoration of access can also extend into

additional phases of SSMP in North Lake. The SSA is working with Desert Recreation District on consideration of these potential opportunities and the role of DRD, as leaseholder of the facility with Riverside County, in the development and operation of a restored facility offering restored access to the Salton Sea.

While the major portion of this project is prepping for launch, significant preliminary work has been completed, including cleanup of the boat ramp and prep of environmental reports required for permits. The ramp is already cleaned & grubbed, ready for the next phases of the project. State partner DWR has produced draft agreements for their portion of contribution to this interagency project. SSA staff are working to resolve O&M responsibilities for the project prior to SSA board consideration of approval to drawdown funds per the DWR funding agreement.

This project is an example of the progress that can be replicated at other points of access around the Sea. Harbors that once provided access to the Sea are now unable to continue that function due to lowered Sea elevations and silt drift that has blocked ingress/egress from the harbors.

## **FUNDING**

### ***State:***

- The final state budget approved by the legislature and the Governor provides significant new momentum for the SSA in terms of the Administration's commitment to the Salton Sea. The state budget proposes the following Salton Sea funding through Dept of Water Resources:
  - \$28 M for New River Improvement Plan – this retains the original apportionment from the Governor's January draft: \$18M from general fund and \$10M from Prop 68 to SSA.
  - \$19.25 M for North Lake development – Prop 68 funds would flow to SSA thru DWR's local assistance program

Also, the Governor's budget is funding an additional 10 FT state staff positions dedicated to the Salton Sea, with 8 of the 10 positions located in the local Salton Sea office. Two of the positions – an exec support position and legal counsel – will be located in Sacramento.

### ***Federal:***

- The Salton Sea received its first Congressional Hearing since 1997 one week following the Sept 17 SSA Board meeting. SSA and each of its member agencies provided written testimony and every SSA Director endorsed the testimony provided to the Congressional Committee by Chairman Thomas Torte of the Torres Martinez Band of Desert Cahuilla, a SSA member agency. The testimony underscored the tenets of the SSA Board-approved federal legislative platform for 2020 calling for federal agency investments commensurate with its property ownership and public trust and tribal trust responsibilities at the Sea. A



resolution of support for principles of federal partnership at the Salton Sea is proposed for SSA Board consideration at the October 2020 board meeting.

- Previously, at the Strategic Planning Workshop in July, Directors expressed further support for developing legislative mandates for federal actions that would include the following:
  - Federal Sea acreage management obligation
  - Federal funding obligation, established mainly through a USDA Sea initiative targeting 2018 Farm Bill successes
  - Federal obligation to abide by federal environmental laws including mitigation of federal environmental impacts to the Salton Sea
  - Expedited Corps permitting.
- US Department of Agriculture – SSA and its member agencies, working in concert with the CNRA, are focusing on completion of a Watershed Plan prerequisite to securing additional federal funding (\$500 million annually) for USDA programs that could be matched with non-federal funding to accelerate the SSMP. SSA staff have conferred with CNRA counterparts to affirm SSA's intent to secure the maximum return on this opportunity, starting with the completion of a prerequisite Watershed Plan that is compatible with SSMP. SSA has already secured federal funding to complete this planning step and is coordinating further with CNRA to assure timely progress on this item for the benefit of all concerned. This enormous progress was achieved in part because every SSA director, along with leaders from stakeholder groups and the CNRA, signed a series of joint letters to help reinforce successful passage of the Farm Bill in 2018.
- Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) – In accord with SSA board direction, the SSA and partner agencies are focused upon development and promotion of projects in the SSMP that will meet the eligibility requirements for ACOE funding. SSA staff and consultants are also working on proposals consistent with the SSA board-adopted legislative platform that will allow placement and funding for the ACOE Work Plan for upcoming budgets, and the eventual access to WRDA authorization (\$30 million). The SSA has historically supported the Torres Martinez Tribe application for the Tribal Partnership Program that may provide Army Corps engagement in projects in the Salton Sea watershed on Torres Martinez tribal lands.
- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) – SSA is supporting policies that empower local partner agencies to maximize state and federal investments at the Salton Sea in a Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovative Act (WIFIA) strategy. WIFIA provides a federal loan and guarantee program that aims to accelerate investment in the nation's water infrastructure by providing long-term, low-cost supplemental loans for regionally and nationally significant projects, including many county water infrastructure projects. Prospective borrowers seeking WIFIA credit assistance must submit a letter of interest (LOI) to EPA to initiate the process. Discussions are on-going among potential local partners in EIFD strategies for application in subsequent rounds of WIFIA.

## SELF HELP STRATEGIES

### *IFD/EIFD*

SSMP inclusion of the concept of stable shoreline anticipated in a Perimeter Lake concept represents a significant step toward establishing viable EIFD's in the respective county jurisdictions. Properly configured and expeditiously timed in coordination with SSA and member agencies, the state funding deployed Sea projects designed to create a stable shoreline would enhance economic benefits on shore, thus stimulating an otherwise nonexistent revenue stream that can be harnessed locally in partnership with the state and federal governments to address shared concerns at the Sea. This is a critical finding in published economic benefit analyses that has become critically important in the emerging federal and state stimulus discussion.

Riverside County Board of Supervisors authorized creation of an EIFD for the Salton Sea area in October 2018, and its newly appointed Finance Authority Board held a workshop at the North Shore Yacht Club (Oct 15, 2019). Riverside County remains committed to moving forward with the EIFD which will provide a powerful new financing strategy for economic recovery benefiting the Salton Sea, California and the federal government, provided public investments in infrastructure at the Sea are configured in a manner that integrates economic development (recreation, renewable energy) with projects delivering dust control and habitat restoration.

Imperial County has also engaged in preliminary exploration of this financing mechanism to enhance infrastructure onshore as a catalyst for economic development in tourism and enormous renewable energy opportunities.

The Perimeter Lake concept, promoted by the SSA and endorsed by all of the SSA member agencies plus tribal councils and city councils throughout both Imperial Valley and Coachella Valley, is the concept that most thoroughly embraces this multi-benefit strategy while accomplishing SSMP objectives for the state.

The SSA state legislative platform states:

***“Coupled with the SSMP is a stipulated State Water Board Order between the state and the parties of the QSA establishing accountable performance to implement the SSMP. The SSA, along with every county, city, water agency and tribe in the Salton Basin, are united in supporting a Perimeter Lake strategy that will accomplish all of these State obligations in a manner that builds opportunity for economic development that can help establish a healthier, more prosperous Sea.”***

The SSA Board approved a resolution to recognize this historic level of local unity on the Perimeter Lake concept at the May 2019 Board of Directors meeting. The Perimeter Lake concept

– which includes SCH and North Lake projects as the first and second steps (respectively) toward a series of additional projects providing the benefits of a stable shoreline – is universally supported by local governments around the Salton Sea. Both counties, all SSA member agencies, all cities in both Imperial and Coachella Valleys, plus major Tribal nations have approved letters or resolutions of support for the Perimeter Lake. As noted, the CNRA has included Perimeter Lake concepts of the SCH and North Lake in the SSMP 10-Year Plan. This unified action provides a major boost toward establishing viable EIFD's around the Salton Sea.

The IFD concept in the SSA Financial Feasibility Action Plan assumes the primary benefits to the property values would be derived from infrastructure built in the Sea that would create a stable shoreline with water distribution for dust control and deep-water habitat in addition to restored recreational value for marina communities and renewable energy development. A subsequent report by Tourism Economics, based on far more conservative assumptions, still supports the findings that significant revenues may be generated from a project that creates deep water habitat on the north end of the Sea.

The report assumes the in-sea infrastructure would: 1) protect existing and future communities from an emissive lakebed exposed by a shrinking sea and an otherwise receding shoreline; and 2) provide a shoreline with aquatic recreation on a scale that would draw tourists, recreationists, and additional residential or commercial investment that could meet a growing demand for services and amenities related to a recreational lake.

A Perimeter Lake designed to create a stable shoreline would deliver the essential state mitigations for environmental protection and habitat while enhancing economic development that can provide a more financially sustainable Sea in the future. Over time, EIFD's are expected to harness local revenues that would otherwise dissipate to the general fund of each county. A Salton Sea EIFD would instead direct a portion of these improved revenues to productive projects at the Salton Sea in potential partnership with private sector, as well as state and federal governments.

SSA member agencies have taken historic steps to support financial strategies that can generate new and sustainable local investment in infrastructure around the Sea that can accelerate and sustain progress in partnership with the state and federal governments. Specifically, the counties are moving forward with EIFD proposals that can reinforce and accelerate public-private partnership investment at the Sea, leveraging the public infrastructure investments anticipated with the SSMP.

Initial observations find that unless COVID impacts on the regional economy become permanent, the pandemic does not appear to hinder the viability of this long-term financing tool. EIFD plans are designed to generate revenue over 40 years, long after an economic downturn has had opportunity to recover. Because revenue streams from EIFD are determined by the creation of improved property value from infrastructure investment, a lower base value of property can actually create a higher ultimate yield as property values improve as a result of EIFD investments

from the public sector. Additionally, lower interest rates for bonds aligned with an EIFD may be secured.

The EIFD rules call for investment in a specific defined infrastructure that establishes a clear nexus of benefit to the community or district that funds the infrastructure. The infrastructure associated with the Perimeter Lake, to be built in a manner that complements the state priorities and investment in SSMP, is identified as the primary project to be supported by the SSA, and all counties, cities and tribes throughout the Imperial and Coachella Valleys. This is fully consistent with the letter and spirit of state law as expressed in AB 71 (Perez). The Perimeter Lake is also internally consistent with the SSMP 10-Year Plan which includes the SCH on the New River and Northern Perimeter Lake on Whitewater, respectively as the first and second major projects that can anchor a series of additional SSMP projects. The objective is to establish a stable shoreline covering dusty playa and restoring aquatic habitat in a manner that enhances economic opportunity in recreation and renewable energy development - keys to yielding a healthier and more prosperous Salton Sea in the long term.

The SSA will continue to cooperate and consult with county officials for the purpose of outlining a coordinated strategy and timeline for next steps that can accelerate local priorities in a manner consistent with state obligations and resources under the SSMP.





## **New River Improvement Project Strategic Plan**

### **City Council Update Presentation**

**October 7, 2020**

1

## **R1: Infrastructure Improvements**

### **Trash Screen/ Diversion Structure**

- Fully automated
- Remove 1 ton/day of domestic trash

### **Bypass Encasement**

- Commence near International Boundary
- Outfall east of All-American Canal

### **Pump Back System/Force Main**

- 5.0 million gallons/day
- Tertiary treated wastewater from Calexico Waste Water Treatment Plant

### **CEQA to be completed by City of Calexico**

2

## CEQA Process – City of Calexico

CEQA TASK	TIMEFRAME
CEQA Draft Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND)	MBI provided Calexico a draft document for review and public circulation
Assembly Bill 52 Tribal Consultation	Initiated prior to public review of the MND and completed prior to MND adoption
Public Review and Comment Period for Draft Initial Study/MND a) Publish Notice of Intent and adopt MND b) Submit documents to the State Clearinghouse	30-60 days
Prepare Final Documents for Adoption ▪ Responses to Comments ▪ Final MND ▪ Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program	30-60 days
Adoption of MND by Calexico City Council	30-60 days <b>Adopted on June 17, 2020</b>
File Notice of Determination with County Clerk and State Clearinghouse	Within 5 business days after adoption of MND <b>Filed on June 23, 2020</b>
Public Appeal Period	30 days <b>Concluded July 23, 2020 (no appeals received)</b>

3

## Regulatory Permitting (Complete CEQA)

- Permits will be required from:
  - California Department of Fish and Wildlife
  - Regional Water Quality Control Board
  - U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- MBI conducted initial consultations, next step will be to contact agencies directly for pre-application consultations.

4

## Summary of Probable Costs

<u>Construction Item</u>	<u>Total Construction Budget</u>
Bypass Encasement	\$14,916,482
Pump Back System/Force Main	\$5,373,893
Trash Screen and Diversion Structure	\$7,329,500
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$27,619,875</b>

- Does not include hazardous disposal.
- Does not include treatment during construction dewatering.
- Based on unknown factors associated with owner permitting and CEQA processing, a 30% contingency has been applied to the numbers above.

5

## Michael Baker International, Inc.- Final Design

- **100% Design – Complete**
- **Technical Specifications – Complete**
- **Geotechnical Report – Complete**
- **Computational Fluid Dynamics Report – Complete**
- **Hydraulics Report – Complete**
- **City of Calexico has a copy of the 100% Submittal Package**

6

## Opportunities/Next Steps

- Request Revisions to New River Improvement Strategic Plan
  - Incorporate improvement infrastructure projects to reaches of the Plan
  - Imperial County proposed Water/Disinfection Facility
  - Work with Regional Water Quality Control Board, Colorado River Basin Region
- City of Calexico, Imperial County and Imperial Irrigation District Memorandum of Understanding signed October 2017.
- Public Outreach efforts through local network of community-based organizations and government agencies.
- City of Calexico will work to finalize a funding agreement with the State of California by December 31, 2020.

7



**Miguel Figueroa**

**City Manager**

Email: [mfigueroa@calexico.ca.gov](mailto:mfigueroa@calexico.ca.gov)

Department Telephone: (760) 768-2110



8





## Memorandum

To: Phil Rosentrater, GM/Executive Director  
Salton Sea Authority (SSA)

From: Joseph Caldwell, Program Manager  
County of Riverside Transportation Land Management Agency (TLMA)

Date: October 22, 2020

Re: North Lake Pilot Demonstration Project

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At your request, we are providing a brief summary of the progress made on the Scope of Work, Budget, Tasks and Schedule for the North Lake Pilot Demonstration Project Grant Funding.

Webb Associates has been retained by the County of Riverside Transportation Land Management Agency (TLMA) to assist in program management on August 17, 2020. Over the course of two months, the program management team proceeded to conduct weekly meetings with TLMA, SSA, and the Partnering State Agencies—California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA), and Department of Water Resources (DWR), SSA, as well as regular updates to the County Supervisor. Meetings have also been conducted with the Coachella Valley Water District (CVWD) and TetraTech, as well as a review of various documents and reports in order to understand the project and develop a Scope of Work, Budget and Schedule. The following is a summary of the milestones in the development of these items.

- 9/17/2020-First draft of the Scope of Work was prepared and circulated to TLMA and SSA for review and comment.
- 9/21/2020-County TLMA reviewed the draft Scope of Work and provided comments.
- 9/21/2020-Revisions were incorporated and returned to TLMA and SSA.
- 9/22/2020-Draft project schedule was developed and circulated to Riverside County TLMA and SSA with the revised Scope of Work.
- 9/24/2020-Draft budget was developed and distributed to the Riverside County TLMA and SSA along with additional revisions to the Scope of Work and Schedule. Additional comments were provided by Riverside County TLMA which were addressed, and a final version was provided to Riverside County TLMA for distribution to the Department of Water Resources (DWR) and California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA).

- 10/01/2020-10/22/2020-Meetings were held on October 1<sup>st</sup>, October 8<sup>th</sup>, October 13<sup>th</sup>, October 17<sup>th</sup>, and October 22<sup>nd</sup> with various parties including Riverside County TLMA, SSA, DWR, CRNA, Supervisor Perez and others to further refine the Scope of Work and budget.
- 10/15/2020-Site visit was conducted to view potential site locations and identify potential opportunities and constraints.
- 10/22/2020-The updated draft was provided to DWR to incorporate into the grant agreement template so that the scope of work, budget and schedule can be finalized.
- CNRA/DWR will need general approval by SSA before they can move forward with grant execution and funding. Therefore, they have requested that SSA Board authorize the General Manager, through minute order, to execute the agreement subject to review by legal counsel. This Minute Order will need to be incorporated into the grant agreement.
- Once the draft grant agreement is finalized with all parties (target early November), DWR can move forward with processing the Grant Agreement (allow minimum of 3-.4 weeks).

**Thomas Tortez, Jr.**  
**Tribal Council Chairman, Torres Martinez Desert Cahuilla**  
**Director, Salton Sea Authority**

**Hearing on**  
**Federal and State Efforts to Restore the Salton Sea**  
**Before the Oceans, Water and Wildlife Subcommittee of the**  
**House Natural Resources Committee**

**September 24, 2020**

Chairman and Ranking Member, I sincerely appreciate the opportunity to testify today. I am the Tribal Council Chairman of the Torres Martinez Desert Cahuilla (Tribe) and a director on the Salton Sea Authority (SSA). I offer this testimony on behalf of both the Tribe and SSA.

I want to begin by thanking Congressman Ruiz (D-Calif.) and Congressman Vargas (D-Calif.) for their hard work to place this issue squarely before the Committee today. The Tribe and SSA view this hearing as a very important beginning of a more robust Congressional effort to drive federal action at the Salton Sea.

The Tribe's reservation is comprised of 2,000 acres in and around the Salton Sea. This is our aboriginal homeland and it must be protected for current and future generations. The Tribe is a member of SSA, a Joint Powers Authority established under California law in 1993 to protect public health, the environment and economic vitality of the Salton Sea and the surrounding region. In addition to the Tribe, SSA is comprised of Coachella Valley Water District, Imperial County, Imperial Irrigation District, and Riverside County.

In keeping with its mission, SSA develops Salton Sea restoration plans, secures funding and manages restoration projects, and advocates for state and federal policies to ensure the protection of this critical resource and region.

The persistent, collaborative work of SSA, its member agencies and the state of California has resulted in significant recent progress at the Salton Sea. For example, this state-local collaboration led to our recent success in securing \$49 million in new state funding to develop both New River and North Lake projects. And, through the hard work of SSA member agency Imperial Irrigation District (IID) and the California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA), easements have been finalized that clear the way for the 3,770 Species Conservation Habitat project, a major 3,770-acre project at the Sea's south end. This major project will break ground this summer.

In this testimony, SSA advances three key points principally focused on the issue of federal engagement at the Salton Sea.

First, SSA describes the federal interests and responsibilities at the Salton Sea which justify a more significant federal role. The Trump administration FY2021 budget for the Interior Department acknowledges this federal role, estimating an approximate \$332.5 million federal

legal obligation to mitigate the impacts of Salton Sea playa exposure on federal lands just related to the Clean Air Act. Interior further estimates \$4.375 million in annual operations and maintenance costs associated with this mitigation.

Second, SSA describes the key state-level mandates local stakeholders put into place in order to reverse seventeen years of state inaction. These mandates galvanized the significant recent progress made to address Salton Sea concerns. They provide a roadmap to Congress regarding steps it should take to reverse federal inaction.

Third, SSA strongly recommends that Congress adopt a similar directive approach for the federal government.

This more directive approach is embodied in new legislation soon to be introduced by Congressman Ruiz. “The Salton Sea Public Health and Environmental Protection Act” will mobilize long-overdue federal action to support state and local Salton Sea management activities. The legislation would harness key federal authorities and funding tools advanced by SSA and enacted by Congress to mandate action at the Salton Sea.

This new legislation would advance several key priorities reflected in SSA’s federal legislative platform. First, it includes a mandate that the federal government meaningfully contribute to Salton Sea management by creating a federal Salton Sea acreage management requirement akin to the state-level acreage management mandate. Second, it provides that the federal government avoid and mitigate the additional impacts to the Salton Sea from further changes to Colorado River reservoir storage operations and that it does so in advance of such changes. Finally, to ensure that these requirements are met, the legislation creates a federal agency management council to identify a federal funding plan and regular Congressional reporting requirements to drive action and accountability.

It is important to note that the legislation directs that these activities be undertaken in close coordination with the state of California, Tribe and SSA, in recognition of the importance of assuring locally crafted and supported solutions drive Salton Sea management.

We look forward to working with the Committee to advance this important legislation.

It has been brought to SSA’s attention that our federal partners have declined the Committee’s invitation to testify today to discuss the critical issue of federal responsibility at the Salton Sea. This failure to appear is unfortunately reflective of the federal government’s long-standing abdication of its responsibilities at the Salton Sea. It demonstrates precisely why this new legislation is necessary.

While disappointing, the lack of federal agency participation in this hearing does not undermine its value for the Committee. Our state partners will describe the significant progress that has been made in recent years at the Salton Sea. And below SSA will share our perspective on the path that led to this progress. This path should be replicated by Congress on the federal level to overcome the inaction of our federal partners.

We cannot throw up our hands and accept this federal indifference to the crisis at the Salton Sea. The federal government is a key partner at the Salton Sea, as a federal land manager, as a tribal trustee and as a caretaker of a natural resource of national significance.

Further, the Salton Sea and federal Colorado River management operations are intertwined. Management of Colorado River water supply reservoirs affect the Salton Sea. Long-term agreements concerning the management of these reservoirs will be renegotiated in coming years and will raise Salton Sea concerns. Exposed Salton Sea playa could total as much as 100,000 acres in the future due to drought and the current water conservation agreements that greatly benefit the seven-state Colorado River Basin and our nation's water supply security.

The time is long overdue for meaningful federal action at the Salton Sea to address all of these concerns.

## **I. Federal Interests and Responsibility at the Salton Sea Are Significant and Justify an Increased Federal Role**

The Salton Sea, California's largest lake, occupies approximately 370 square miles in Imperial and Riverside counties in southeastern California. The Sea is sustained primarily by agricultural drainage flows from roughly 600,000 acres of farmland. Since the early 2000s, inflows to the Salton Sea have been significantly affected by voluntary water conservation efforts that have greatly benefited the nation's water supply security.

The ecological significance of the Salton Sea is due largely to its habitat value for over 400 species of birds, including threatened and endangered species. According to the Bureau of Reclamation, the Sea's "combination of avian biodiversity and importance as breeding habitat is unsurpassed." The Salton Sea is also a major stopover on the 5,000-mile-long Pacific Flyway. Because over 90 percent of California's wetlands have been lost to development, maintaining the bird habitat provided by the Salton Sea is crucial to the survival of migratory birds in the region.

Congress has repeatedly affirmed a strong federal interest in the Salton Sea, requiring Department of the Interior (Interior) to develop management plans in 1992, 1998, and 2007. Interior owns roughly 40 percent of the Salton Sea, including the 35,000-acre Sonny Bono National Wildlife Refuge at the Sea's south end. Interior interests also include tribal trust responsibilities associated with the Torres Martinez Tribe, which occupies 2,000 acres at the Sea's north end.

While Interior has the most significant federal role at the Salton Sea, other federal agencies also play important roles or have important interests impacted by Salton Sea management. The Army Corps of Engineers is the lead permitting authority for Salton Sea management projects and has been directed by Congress to develop Sea restoration projects. The Department of Agriculture (USDA) has developed conservation pilot projects in order to protect the viability of agricultural production in the Salton Sea region. In the 2018 Farm Bill, SSA advocated for and secured major new financial resources and authority for USDA to expand this work.

The Department of Defense manages the 357 square mile Chocolate Mountain Aerial Gunnery Range located directly to the east of the Salton Sea, which is one of the most heavily used and important aerial gunnery ranges in the nation used by the Marines and Navy.

Further, the Salton Sea and surrounding region possesses an abundant supply of renewable energy and is a key national energy resource. The Bureau of Land Management's Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan estimates renewable energy generation potential at 10,000 megawatts in the Salton Sea region. The Salton Sea itself possesses more geothermal capacity than anywhere else in the nation. The Known Geothermal Resource Area (KGRA) in and around the Salton Sea is estimated to contain up to 2,000 megawatts of untapped geothermal energy. The KGRA already produces 544 megawatts of geothermal, providing reliable, base load power from facilities at the Salton Sea to energy consumers. The Salton Sea geothermal resource is also now receiving substantial investment for the sustainable extraction of lithium from geothermal brine.

## **II. Recent State Progress Is Driven by an Enforceable State Order and Provides a Replicable Model for Federal Action**

The Committee last examined Salton Sea concerns over two decades ago on October 3, 1997 in a hearing entitled "On Degradation of the Salton Sea Ecosystem." A key theme in the hearing was the need for local, state and federal officials to step up and take responsibility to manage the unfolding public health, environmental and economic crisis at the Salton Sea. In the words of Senator Feinstein (D-Calif.) who testified at that hearing: "Because the Salton Sea is an environmental and economic resource of regional and national significance, I strongly believe that the federal, state and local governments all must share in the responsibility for saving the Sea and in paying for its restoration."

SSA agreed with that statement and worked to meet that responsibility.

Witnesses at that hearing called for strikingly similar management activities as those which are now finally in progress at the Salton Sea thanks to state and local leadership. This includes the Species Conservation Habitat (SCH) project at the Sea's south end, which will break ground this year and will provide roughly 3,770 acres of shallow water habitat. It also includes the North Lake project, which will provide critical deep-water habitat and economic revitalization at the Sea's north end. Concerns were also raised during the 1997 hearing regarding the severe pollution affecting the New River, which flows into the Salton Sea. In its most recent budget, the state of California has dedicated \$29 million to the New River Improvement Project to begin to address this public health and environmental hazard. Overall, the state of California has committed roughly \$300 million to these Salton Sea efforts.

It is important to note that state and SSA member agencies recently took several critical actions to advance these projects and Governor Newsom allocated significant financial resources to this work in the thick of the current COVID-19 public health and economic crisis. This reflects the depth state and local commitment to the Salton Sea.

As you consider how best to ensure that federal partners rise to the state and local level of commitment at the Salton Sea, the Committee and Congress can learn from SSA's experience in driving change at the state level to accomplish similar change at the federal level.

For over seventeen years, federal and state responses at the Salton Sea followed a similar course. Salton Sea restoration plans to address the impacts of local water conservation efforts undertaken to benefit the broader Colorado River Basin region were formulated on the state and federal levels, but not implemented. As water was transferred from the Salton Sea region to benefit our neighbors in the Basin States, SSA member agencies undertook the mitigation required under water agreements, but the state government failed to fulfill its commitments. And the federal government — a major Salton Sea landowner itself — failed to protect key federal interests at the Salton Sea and to fulfill its tribal trust responsibilities to the Torres Martinez Tribe.

This abdication of responsibility resulted in dire public health, economic and environmental consequences. The region has the highest rate of asthma in California and the highest rate of childhood emergency room admissions for asthma and respiratory concerns. Dust emissions from a declining Salton Sea threaten the viability of area agriculture, a major economic driver in the region. Declining inflows has roughly doubled salinity levels in the Salton Sea since this Committee's 1997 hearing, imperiling key migratory bird habitat along the Pacific Flyway. A 2014 study by the Pacific Institute estimated that the public health, ecological and economic costs of inaction at the Salton Sea at \$70 billion.

How did we reverse this dismal history of state inaction at the Salton Sea? We adopted firm commitments and mandates.

In 2014, SSA member agency IID petitioned the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) to order the state of California to take action. That process led to the development of California's Salton Sea Management Program (SSMP) Phase 1: 10-Year Plan, which calls for the management of 30,000 acres of exposed Salton Sea playa. In 2017, the SWRCB adopted State Water Board Order 2017-0134 establishing specific annual acreage management goals based on the SSMP and dictated that the state develop a long-term management plan.

### **III. Congress Should Adopt Similar Mandates to Drive Federal Action**

State and local Salton Sea partners have long worked to draw federal partners into a more active role at the Salton Sea. These efforts have focused on non-binding memorandum of understanding agreements and non-mandatory directives from Congress. The state of California and SSA have also worked with Congress to enact several laws to provide the federal government with both the authority and funding to undertake a more active role at the Salton Sea. As described below, federal partners have not fulfilled their commitments under such agreements, nor have they used the legislative tools we have worked with Congress to provide. As with our experience at the state-level, a more directive approach from Congress is needed to mobilize action at the federal level.

Several of the provisions in Congressman Ruiz's soon to be released Salton Sea legislation are drawn from commitments made but not kept in such agreements. In 2016, Interior and the CNRA negotiated a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) wherein Interior pledged to become a full and active partner at the Salton Sea. In the agreement, Interior acknowledged its legal duties to follow federal environmental laws, pledged to develop funding partnerships with other federal agencies already engaged at the Salton Sea like USDA, and pledged to perform a federal funding analysis that would identify ways to meet the "anticipated financial need to reach [SSMP] acreage goals and creative means to meet them." Finally, Interior pledged to dedicate a senior level official and convene a Salton Sea Working Group tasked with ensuring MOU implementation and expediting permitting processes at the Sea.

Interior failed to fulfill *any* of these commitments.

In 2017, Senators Feinstein and Harris and Congressmen Ruiz and Vargas together wrote to the Secretary of the Interior to urge implementation of the MOU. No action was undertaken by Interior in response to this request. Also, in 2017, CNRA Secretary Laird wrote to then-Interior Deputy Secretary Bernhardt to urge MOU implementation. No action was undertaken by Interior in response to this request. Senator Feinstein then included direction in the FY18 Energy and Water Appropriations Act to urge Interior to implement the MOU, to provide a Salton Sea budget request to Congress, and to report to Congress on its MOU progress on a biannual basis. No action was undertaken by Interior in response to this request.

In 2018, SSA worked with Senator Feinstein to draft legislation for the 2018 Farm Bill to provide both the authority and funding to USDA to expand existing conservation projects at the Salton Sea. USDA funding is among the most assured in the federal government, as it comes from mandatory funding accounts, not subject to the uncertainties of the federal appropriations process. This effort included increasing mandatory conservation program funding by \$2.6 billion, and provided USDA with key, flexible authorities to expand existing USDA pilot projects directly on the Salton Sea playa.

In 2019, Senators Feinstein and Harris and Congressmen Ruiz and Vargas worked to secure the support of USDA and Interior to target this new Farm Bill funding to match state of California funding at the Salton Sea. SSA strongly supported that effort. Although USDA has administratively created over 70 conservation initiatives on its own accord to address conservation concerns quite similar to those at the Salton Sea, the administration declined to advance that effort.

The inability to motivate a strong federal response with these less prescriptive methods since 2016 shows that the more directive approach embodied in Congressman Ruiz's new legislation is sorely needed. SSA's experience in recent years at the state level gives us confidence that stronger direction from Congress is the key to mobilizing a meaningful federal Salton Sea response.

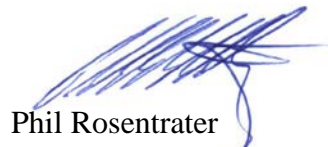
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Tragically, the heavy Salton Sea-related air pollution burden borne by our communities left many especially vulnerable to COVID-19 health impacts. And the economic impact of COVID-19 on future state budgets is likely to be significant and could exacerbate these problems. In view of these challenges, SSA urges Congress to expeditiously mobilize additional federal resources to diminish these burdens, and to expedite the critical public health and environmental work at the Salton Sea. In SSA's view, the federal government has both a clear legal and moral obligation to step up and match state and local efforts to better conserve and manage the Salton Sea.

SSA looks forward to working with the Committee on Congressman Ruiz's legislation to ensure the federal government meets these critical obligations. Thank you for this opportunity to present this testimony to the Committee today.

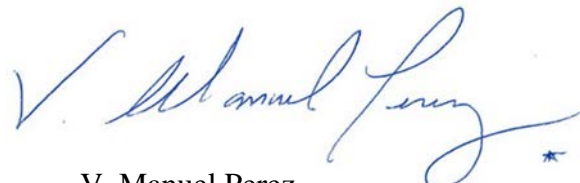
Sincerely,




Phil Rosentrater  
GM/Executive Director  
Salton Sea Authority




Alex Cardenas  
SSA President  
Imperial Irrigation District



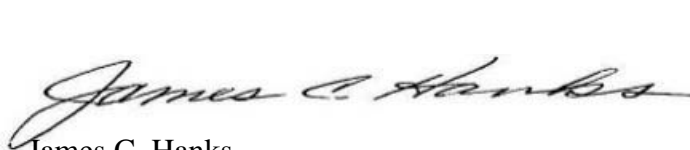
V. Manuel Perez  
SSA Vice-President  
County of Riverside




Altrena Santillanes  
SSA Treasurer  
Torres Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians



Luis A. Plancarte  
SSA Secretary  
County of Imperial



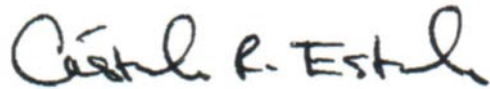
James C. Hanks  
SSA Director  
Imperial Irrigation District



Ryan Kelley, Supervisor  
SSA Director  
County of Imperial



Thomas TorteZ  
SSA Director  
Torres Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians



Cástulo R. Estrada  
SSA Director  
Coachella Valley Water District



G. Patrick O'Dowd  
SSA Director  
Coachella Valley Water District



Jeff Hewitt  
SSA Director  
County of Riverside