



AGENDA:
DATE:
LOCATION:

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
Thursday, July 20, 2023, at 10:00 a.m.
Imperial County BOS Chamber
940 W. Main Street
El Centro, CA 92243

The Following Salton Sea Authority Directors will be attending via video/teleconference from:

Director John Aguilar
Coachella Valley Water
District
189 Orontes Way
Cathedral City

Director Alex Cardenas
Imperial Irrigation District, Div.1
APPA Offices
2451 Crystal Dr. Ste. 1000
Arlington, VA 92202

*The meeting can be viewed live at **10:00 a.m. on July 20th**. Please see the meeting login information at SaltonSea.com/meetings, or access www.zoom.us, click "Join Meeting," and enter **Webinar ID 862 8322 9333** and **Passcode 446431**.*

I. CALL TO ORDER

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ROLL CALL

A copy of the agenda and supplemental materials will be available for viewing or download at: saltonsea.com/meetings

II. PUBLIC COMMENTS

This Public Comments time is reserved for comments on any non-action agenda item and for matters not on the agenda. California law prohibits members of the Board from taking action on matters not on the agenda.

Members of the public may address the Board regarding any matter within the Authority's jurisdiction and are invited to speak to any specific action item in the agenda at the time it is called. All non-action agenda items should be addressed during this general public comment period.

Remarks shall be limited to a maximum of three (3) minutes.

When you speak, state your name for the record prior to providing your comments.

Please address your comments to the Chairperson.

If present in person, complete a "request to speak" form and give it to the board secretary.

*Via Zoom: use Zoom's "raised hand" feature, or by phone press *9 to be acknowledged.*

Written comments must be received by noon Wednesday, July 19, 2023, to be incorporated in the record.

Comments may be emailed to info@saltonsea.com (include in your subject line “Public Comment, 7/20/2023 Salton Sea Authority board meeting”) or delivered by hand or mailed to 82995 Highway 111, Suite 200, Indio, California, “Attn: Clerk of the Board, Salton Sea Authority”.

All written comments should include your name, address (addresses will be redacted), and whether it is for general public comment or a specific agenda item (provide number and topic). Comments received in writing, either by email or written, will be distributed to the Board, posted on the Salton Sea Authority website for public review and, **if received before noon on Wednesday, July 19**, will be acknowledged during public comments. Written comments will be included in the public record but not be read aloud.

III. **BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS**

This is a time set aside for members of the Board to share their thoughts and concerns regarding general Authority matters not on the agenda, ask questions of staff, and request that items be added to a future agenda.

The Brown Act expressly prohibits lengthy Board Member discussion of matters not on the agenda. The Board may at its discretion (by 4/5 vote) add items deemed to be an emergency to the agenda to engage in public discourse.

IV. **ITEMS FOR BOARD DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION**

A. **CONSENT CALENDAR – Approve; Receive, and File**

1. Minutes of Salton Sea Authority Board Meeting June 22, 2023
2. Salton Sea Authority Warrant Register Ratification for April 30, 2023
3. Salton Sea Authority Internal Financial Report for: 7/01/2022 – 05/31/2023

B. Colorado River Commitments Agreement / SEIS / EIS – Discussion regarding assessment of impacts to the Salton Sea and region, and plan for mitigation.

C. SB 583 (Padilla) – Update on bill language and legislative process. Evaluate current bill position – “Oppose Unless Amended”.

D. Projects Update

E. Ratification of Board of Directors Committee Assignments

V. **REPORTS**

A. Federal

1. Federal Activities – Lisa Moore Lehman, Partner, Cultivating Conservation
2. US Bureau of Reclamation – Jeremy Brooks, Salton Sea Program Manager - No Report

B. State

1. State Advocacy Report – Oracio Gonzalez, Principal, Ollin Strategies

2. State of California – Mr. Miguel Hernandez, Public Affairs Officer, California Natural Resources Agency
3. Salton Sea State Recreation Area Update on Activities – Andrew Ahlberg, Interim District Superintendent (No report anticipated – we are informed that Steve Quartieri has retired effective June 1st)

C. Local

1. Salton Sea Action Committee – Juan DeLara, SSAC

D. Executive Director’s Report and Comments

1. G. Patrick O’Dowd, Executive Director/GM, Salton Sea Authority

VI. ADJOURNMENT

NEXT MEETING TIME & LOCATION:

The Salton Sea Authority board is scheduled to meet on:

Thursday, September 21, 2023, at 10:00 a.m.

Imperial County

Board of Supervisors Chamber

940 W. Main Street

El Centro, CA 92243

(442) 265-1020

OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS

SALTON SEA AUTHORITY

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

June 22, 2023

I. CALL TO ORDER

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Salton Sea Authority (“Authority”) Board of Directors (“Board”) was called to order by Luis A. Plancarte, President, at 10:14 a.m., June 22, 2023, at the North Shore Beach and Yacht Club and via Zoom Webinar.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ROLL CALL

DIRECTORS PRESENT ON SITE

Luis A. Plancarte, President
Altrena Santillanes, Vice President
Alex Cárdenas, Treasurer
Gina N. Dockstader, Director
Samantha Arthur, Ex Officio Board Member

AGENCY

Imperial County
Torres Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians
Imperial Irrigation District
Imperial Irrigation District
California Natural Resources Agency

DIRECTORS PRESENT VIA ZOOM

Yxstian Gutierrez, Director
V. Manuel Perez, Director

AGENCY

County of Riverside
County of Riverside

DIRECTORS ABSENT

Cástulo R. Estrada, Secretary
Ryan Kelley, Director
John Aguilar, Director
Thomas Tortez, Director

AGENCY

Coachella Valley Water District
Imperial County
Coachella Valley Water District
Torres Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians

*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.*

SALTON SEA AUTHORITY STAFF PRESENT

G. Patrick O'Dowd, Executive Director/GM (in person)
Carlos Campos, Best Best & Krieger, Legal Counsel (In Person)

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC PRESENT

On Site: Frank Ruiz, Audubon

Via Zoom: Mario Renteria, Office of Senator Padilla, Ruben Perez, Assemblymember Garcia's office, Lisa Moore, Cultivating Conservation, Oracio Gonzalez, Ollin Strategies, Juan De Lara, SSAC, Alan Pace, SSAC, Mario Lopez, Imperial County, Kristi Even, Eide Bailly, Jim Barrett, CVWD, Tina Shields, IID, Joanna Hoff, IID, Lee Hernandez, IID, Alejandro Espinoza, Evon Willhoff, DWR, Stephanie Holstege, SWRCB and 17 others.

II. PUBLIC COMMENTS

No Comments were made in person.

Comments made Via Zoom: Nathan White commented on Colorado River operational guidelines.

III. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

President Plancarte and Director Dockstader commented favorably on the venue and setup. Director Gutierrez requested staff provide a tour of the Sea.

IV. ITEMS FOR BOARD DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION

A. CONSENT CALENDAR – Approve, Receive, and File

1. Minutes of Salton Sea Authority Board Meeting May 25, 2023
2. Salton Sea Authority Warrant Register Ratification for May 31, 2023
3. Salton Sea Authority Internal Financial Report for: 7/01/2022 – 04/30/2023

Motion made by Treasurer Cardenas, 2nd by Director Dockstader, The Board approved the Consent Calendar to be received and filed. Unanimously approved by the following vote:

AYES: 6

NOES: 0

ABSENT: 4

ABSTAINED: 0

MOTION PASSED: 6-0

B. North Lake Pilot Demonstration Project – Proposition 68 Grant and Project update.

Douglas Ordonez, Sr. Management Analyst, Riverside County gave an update on the North Lake Pilot Demonstration Project.

Director Perez requested more frequent public updates on the project from the County at Authority Board meetings.

Treasurer Cardenas requested that he be included in land access issues, especially those involving IID lands.

C. Colorado River Post-2026 Operational Guidelines – Environmental Assessment Comment Period. Discuss in relation to interim SEIS.

Lisa Moore, Cultivating Conservation provided an update on the Colorado River Operational Guidelines. Staff's Recommendation is that the Board directs staff to provide comments on the environmental impact statement (EIS) prior to deadline of August 13, 2023. Lisa mentioned that the public can also comment on the Bureau's website.

D. SB583 (Padilla) – Bill Status Report and Next Steps.

Executive Director G. Patrick O'Dowd gave a brief update. The Authority provided language to the Senator to shape legislation that addresses the challenges around the Sea without impeding existing work, including the SSMP and ongoing development on the feasibility study.

Treasurer Cardenas informed the Board of IID's position on the bill (Support if Amended)

Ex Officio Arthur advised that the State has not taken a position on the bill.

E. Salton Sea Authority at 30 – a brief look back and discuss moving forward.

Executive Director G. Patrick O'Dowd updated the Board on the 30-year Anniversary and advised that the Celebration will be been rescheduled for September or October.

F. Consideration of Appointments for FY 2023-2024 Officers for the Salton Sea Authority Board of Directors (effective July 1, 2023)

a. Election of President of Board

On motion by Cardenas and second by Perez, the Board approved Santillanes as President.

Approved by the following vote:

AYES: Directors Plancarte, Santillanes, Cardenas, Dockstader, Perez and Gutierrez.

NOES: None

ABSENT: Directors Tortez, Estrada, Aguilar and Kelley.

ABSTAINED: None

MOTION PASSED: 6 – 0

b. Election of Vice-President of Board

On motion by Cardenas and second by Perez, the Board approved Estrada, as Vice-President.

Approved by the following vote:

AYES: Directors Plancarte, Santillanes, Cardenas, Dockstader, Perez and Gutierrez.

NOES: None

ABSENT: Directors Torte, Estrada, Aguilar and Kelley.

ABSTAINED: None

MOTION PASSED: 6 – 0

c. Election of Secretary of Board

On motion by Cardenas and second by Perez, the Board approved Dockstader as Secretary.

Approved by the following vote:

AYES: Directors Plancarte, Santillanes, Cardenas, Dockstader, Perez and Gutierrez.

NOES: None

ABSENT: Directors Torte, Estrada, Aguilar and Kelley.

ABSTAINED: None

MOTION PASSED: 6 – 0

d. Election of Treasurer of Board

On motion by Perez and second by Cardenas, the Board approved Gutierrez as Treasurer.

Approved by the following vote:

AYES: Directors Plancarte, Santillanes, Cardenas, Dockstader, Perez and Gutierrez.

NOES: None

ABSENT: Directors Torte, Estrada, Aguilar and Kelley.

ABSTAINED: None

MOTION PASSED: 6 – 0

G. Consider Approval of Resolution Updating Signatories on Authority's bank account at Pacific Western Bank.

V. REPORTS

A. Federal

1. Federal Activities – Lisa Moore Lehman, Partner, Cultivating Conservation

Lisa Moore gave her update during Item # IV.C.

2. US Bureau of Reclamation – Jeremy Brooks, Salton Sea Program Manager
No Report

B. State

1. State Advocacy Report – Oracio Gonzalez, Principal, Ollin Strategies, provided an update.
2. State of California – Mr. Miguel Hernandez, Public Affairs Officer, California Natural Resources Agency. No Report
3. Salton Sea State Recreation Area Update on Activities – Steve Quartieri, District Superintendent, California State Parks. No Report

C. Local

1. Salton Sea Action Committee – Juan De Lara, SSAC President provided an update.

D. Executive Director’s Report and Comments

1. G. Patrick O’Dowd, Executive Director/GM, Salton Sea Authority, provided an update.

VI. <u>ADJOURNMENT</u>

Board President Plancarte adjourned the meeting at 11:24 a.m.

NEXT MEETING TIME & LOCATION:

The Salton Sea Authority Board of Directors meeting
is scheduled to meet on:

Thursday, July 20, 2023, at 10:00 a.m.

Imperial County

Board of Supervisors Chamber

940 W. Main Street

El Centro, CA 92243

(442) 265-1020



Salton Sea Authority
Checking Account Activity
 April 1, 2023 through April 30, 2023

Date	Number	Vendor Name	Description	Amount
04/14/2023	EFT	Pacific Western Bank	Credit card charges	(4,085.20)
04/15/2023	EFT	Pacific Western Bank	Positive pay fees	(71.00)
04/25/2023	EFT	QuickBooks	Check processing fees	(9.00)
04/22/2023	1335	Verizon Wireless	Monthly phone charges	(143.75)
04/25/2023	6070919	SystemGo IT LLC	Monthly computer support	(580.00)
04/28/2023	6076494	Ollin Strategies	Monthly contract charges	(7,000.00)
04/25/2023	6070484	Thill, Linda	Mileage 1/26/2023	(127.99)
04/25/2023	6070799	Bravata, Lisa	Mileage 03/23 - 3/27/23	(238.42)
04/25/2023	6075714	G. Patrick O'Dowd	Mileage/Travel Expenses - 08/22-9/16/22	(1,643.19)
			Mileage/Travel Expenses - 09/17-12/16/22	
			Mileage/Travel Expenses - 03/20-04/24/23	
04/25/2023	6076228	Cultivating Conservation	Monthly contract charges	(7,400.00)
04/25/2023	6076221	Eide Bailly	February and March accounting services	(9,686.15)
04/28/2023	6076668	Best, Best & Krieger	Services related to COI Code 03/23	(5,103.60)
			Services related to General Matters 03/23	
			Services related to Federal Funding 03/23	
04/14/2023	Deposit	Bureau of Reclamation	Grant reimbursement for period ending 12/22	3,234.17
04/20/2023	Deposit	Pacific Western Bank	Miscellaneous revenue	25.00

Beginning Cash Balance	\$ 158,766.78
Monthly Activity	(32,829.13)
Ending Cash Balance	\$ 125,937.65



Salton Sea Authority
Checking Account Activity
May 1, 2023 through May 31, 2023

Date	Number	Vendor Name	Description	Amount
05/04/2023	Deposit	Department of Water Resources	Grant reimbursement for period ending 12/31/22	12,585.79
05/10/2023	6154873	County of Riverside - Executive Office	Riverside County North Lake reimbursements through 12/31/22	(5,190.90)
05/11/2023	EFT	Pacific Western Bank	Visa Payment for billing cycle ended 04/30/23	(575.68)
05/15/2023	EFT	Pacific Western Bank	Positive pay fees 05/23	(71.00)
05/24/2023	EFT	QuickBooks	Check processing fees 05/23	(7.50)
05/24/2023	6236905	SystemGo IT LLC	Website services 05/23	(382.00)
05/24/2023	6230798	Eide Bailly LLP	Accounting services 04/23	(6,881.80)
05/24/2023	6231076	George Patrick O'Dowd	Mileage 04/27/23 thru 05/22/23	(279.04)
05/24/2023	6234333	Cultivating Conservation	Consulting fees 04/23	(7,350.00)
05/24/2023	6235984	Best, Best & Krieger	Services related to Federal funding and Succession planning 04/23	(2,409.20)
05/24/2023	6236220	Allied	Policy renewal through 04/01/24	(11,331.00)
05/31/2023	Deposit	Verizon Wireless	Refund account credit	143.75
Beginning Cash Balance				\$ 125,937.65
Monthly Activity				(21,748.58)
Ending Cash Balance				\$ 104,189.07



Salton Sea Authority
Checking Account Activity
June 1, 2023 through June 30, 2023

Date	Number	Vendor Name	Description	Amount
06/02/2023	23386195	Kounkuey Design Initiative, Inc.	Consulting Agreement -Task 1	(5,500.00)
06/02/2023	23380126	Kounkuey Design Initiative, Inc.	Consulting Agreement - Task 2	(34,800.00)
06/08/2023	Deposit	Bureau of Reclamation	Grant reimbursment for period ending 03/23	4,393.35
06/08/2023	Deposit	Verizon Wireless	Refund account credit	52.14
06/12/2023	EFT	Pacific Western Bank	Visa billing cycle ended 05/23	(1,532.00)
06/13/2023	6341595	Ollin Strategies	Contract charges 06/23	(7,000.00)
06/14/2023	EFT	QuickBooks	Check processing fees 06/23	(15.00)
06/15/2023	EFT	Pacific Western Bank	Bank fees 06/23	(71.00)
06/20/2023	Deposit	Coachella Valley Water District	FY 2023-2024 Assessment	200,000.00
06/23/2023	6397504	County of Imperial	Bureau of Reclamation reimbursements through 03/23	(2,227.37)
06/23/2023	6391162	Riverside County	Replenish payroll account through year end	(190,000.00)
06/28/2023	Deposit	California Natural Resources Agency	Kounkuey Design Initiative, Inc Reimbursement	49,800.00
06/29/2023	Deposit	Pacific Western Bank	Refund Bank Fees 05/23-06/23	142.00
06/29/2023	6418629	SystemGo IT LLC	SystemGo IT Website 06/23	(382.00)
06/29/2023	6420140	Best, Best & Krieger	Services Related to General Matters for Succession Planning 05/31	(399.54)
06/29/2023	6421319	Best, Best & Krieger	Services Related to Federal Funding 05/31	(1,109.50)
06/29/2023	6419217	Coachella Valley Water District	Board Meeting - Recording & streaming Fee 02/23 & 04/23	(1,500.00)
06/29/2023	6419722	Eide Bailly LLP	Accounting Services 05/23	(3,753.59)
06/29/2023	6419046	Ollin Strategies	Consulting Services 06/23	(7,000.00)
06/29/2023	6418486	Cultivating Conservation	Consulting Fees 05/23	(7,350.00)
06/30/2023	ACH	Bravata, Lisa	Mileage Rate 05/24-06/22/23	(361.80)
06/30/2023	ACH	G. Patrick O'Dowd	Mileage Rate 05/24-06/22/23	(571.82)
Beginning Cash Balance				\$ 104,189.07
Monthly Activity				(9,186.13)
Ending Cash Balance				\$ 95,002.94



Salton Sea Authority

Budget to Actual

General Fund (Unaudited)

For the Period July 1, 2022 through May 31, 2023

	A	B	C	D	C/D	C - D
	April 2023	May 2023	YTD FY 23	Budget FY 23	YTD Target 92%	\$ Variance
1 REVENUE						
2 Local Government / Member Assessments	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 810,000	\$ 800,000	101%	\$ 10,000
3 Other Federal / State / Local Reimbursements	-	-	360	250,000	0%	(249,640)
4 Sponsorships	-	-	686	-	N/A	686
5 Grant Reimbursements to General Fund	-	-	35,619	110,000	32%	(74,381)
6 TOTAL REVENUE	-	-	846,665	1,160,000	73%	(313,335)
7 EXPENSES						
8 SSA Administration						
9 Salaries & Benefits						
10 Total Salaries	23,680	23,827	226,612	270,600	84%	(43,988)
11 Total Employee Benefits	13,893	12,330	129,096	135,300	95%	(6,204)
12 Total Salaries & Benefits	37,573	36,157	355,707	405,900	88%	(50,193)
13 Contract / Professional Services						
14 DC Advocates	7,350	7,350	82,607	88,200	94%	(5,593)
15 Sacramento Advocates	7,000	7,000	77,000	84,000	92%	(7,000)
16 Grant Administration	-	-	55,920	100,000	56%	(44,080)
17 Community Outreach Initiative	-	-	15,000	-	N/A	15,000
18 Attorney Fees	2,409	1,509	41,759	50,000	84%	(8,241)
19 Audit & Accounting	6,882	3,654	63,310	75,000	84%	(11,690)
20 Total Contract / Professional Services	23,641	19,513	335,596	397,200	84%	(61,604)
21 Equipment / IT Maintenance	580	382	7,486	8,700	86%	(1,215)
22 Coachella Water District Board Room Usage Fees	-	-	1,200	-	N/A	1,200
23 Insurance	-	1,889	9,885	10,500	94%	(615)
24 Office Expense/Operating Supplies	115	139	6,079	8,300	73%	(2,221)
25 Office Expense/Online Services	191	291	3,149	3,300	95%	(151)
26 Dues, Subscriptions	669	669	7,751	14,200	55%	(6,449)
27 Travel/Mileage	283	1,573	25,439	40,000	64%	(14,561)
28 County Charges	1,542	164	6,366	-	N/A	6,366
29 TOTAL EXPENSES	64,595	60,776	758,658	888,100	85%	(129,442)
30 NET INCOME / (LOSS)	\$ (64,595)	\$ (60,776)	\$ 88,007	\$ 271,900	32%	\$ (183,893)



Salton Sea Authority

Budget to Actual

DWR - Proposition 68 Grant (Unaudited)

For the Period July 1, 2022 through May 31, 2023

	A	B	C	D	C / D	C - D
	April 2023	May 2023	YTD FY 23	Budget FY 23	YTD Target 92%	\$ Variance
1 REVENUE						
2 State of California Grant (Prop 68)	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 70,822	\$ 2,200,000	3%	\$ (2,129,178)
3 TOTAL REVENUE	-	-	70,822	2,200,000	3%	\$ (2,129,178)
4 EXPENSES						
5 Salton Sea Authority Salaries	-	-	22,702	110,000	21%	(87,298)
6 Riverside County Salaries	-	-	3,395	-	N/A	3,395
7 Contractors	-	-	43,863	2,090,000	2%	(2,046,137)
8 Audit & Accounting	-	-	861	-	N/A	861
9 TOTAL EXPENSES	-	-	70,822	2,200,000	3%	(2,129,178)
10 NET INCOME / (LOSS)	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -		\$ -



Salton Sea Authority

Budget to Actual

BOR -DSR (Unaudited)

For the Period July 1, 2022 through May 31, 2023

	A	B	C	D	C / D	C - D
	April 2023	May 2023	YTD FY 23	Budget FY 23	YTD Target 92%	\$ Variance
1 REVENUE						
2 Bureau of Reclamation Grant	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 22,667	\$ -	N/A	\$ 22,667
3 TOTAL REVENUE	-	-	22,667	-	N/A	\$ 22,667
4 EXPENSES						
5 Salton Sea Authority Salaries	-	-	9,378	-	N/A	9,378
6 Contractors	-	-	10,611	-	N/A	10,611
7 Legal Expenses	-	-	2,677	-	N/A	2,677
8 TOTAL EXPENSES	-	-	22,667	-	N/A	22,667
9 NET INCOME / (LOSS)	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -		\$ -



Salton Sea Authority
Balance Sheet
(Unaudited)
As of May 31, 2023

1	ASSETS		
2	Checking/Savings	\$	(42,121)
3	Other Current Assets		
4	Prepaid Items		14,126
5	Grant Receivable		73,994
6	Total Other Current Assets		<u>88,120</u>
7	TOTAL ASSETS		<u>46,000</u>
8	LIABILITIES & FUND BALANCE		
9	Liabilities		
10	Accounts Payable		19,018
11	Credit Cards		1,548
12	Other Current Liabilities		
13	Accrued Payroll		12,706
14	Due to Imperial County		2,073
15	Due to Riverside County		54,748
16	Accrued Vacation		<u>39,316</u>
17	Total Other Current Liabilities		<u>108,843</u>
18	Total Liabilities		<u>129,409</u>
19	Fund Balance		<u>(83,410)</u>
20	TOTAL LIABILITIES & FUND BALANCE	\$	<u>46,000</u>

Memorandum

To: Salton Sea Authority Board of Directors
From: G. Patrick O'Dowd, Executive Director/GM
Date: July 20, 2023
Re: **Colorado River Environmental Impacts**

Over the course of the past year, we have been tracking developments on the Colorado River which could significantly impact the Salton Sea and region. Since Commissioner Touton first announced potential cuts of up to 2 to 4 million acre feet last June, we have been seeking answers as to how those measures would impact the Imperial and Coachella valleys, and how it would affect the ongoing work related to the QSA transfers and otherwise. In November, 2022, the Bureau of Reclamation began work on a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement, and late last year a "Commitments Agreement" was entered into by the Bureau, the State, IID and CVWD that contemplated among other things some 250,000 acre feet of conservation annually which might be created by the Imperial Irrigation District to support this effort. At that time the State prepared an analysis of the agreement that indicated a potential near term impact of 5,571 to 8,196 acres of additionally exposed playa, based on certain assumptions. However, when we compared that analysis with earlier work prepared by the State and its consultant team, we found these estimates standing in stark contrast to the impacts experienced from the QSA transfer. This is not to say that they are necessarily incorrect. But when the State assumes responsibility for assessing the impacts of curtailments 25% larger than that of the QSA that itself could potentially be paying for mitigation thereof, and at the same time avoiding more lengthy conventional risk assessments through waivers and indemnifications, this effort deserved rigorous scrutiny.

To that end, we have requested both our State and Federal partners work with us on a framework of assurance that would both address local concerns and facilitate an efficient implementation of the Commitments Agreement and the conservation measures contemplated thereby. We have presented several options and continue to seek alignment on this important effort, but to date that has not occurred. However, on June 15th the Department of the Interior announced that it was "initiating the formal process to develop future operating guidelines and strategies to protect the stability and sustainability of the Colorado River. The new guidelines will replace the 2007 Colorado River Interim Guidelines for Lower Basin Shortages and the Coordinated Operations for Lake Powell and Lake Mead, which are set to expire at the end of 2026." This effort is separate from what is now being referred

to as the "Consensus System Conservation Proposal to Protect the Colorado River Basin", and does appear to be far more rigorous than that contemplated for the interim measures. However, since the Salton Sea was totally overlooked in the 2007 Interim Guidelines and subsequent actions, it will be critical to ensure that both the interim measures and the post-2026 actions fully assess and responsibly mitigate impacts to the Sea and our communities. The Salton Sea Authority will remain vigilant to ensure that happens.

Respectfully submitted,



G. Patrick O'Dowd
Executive Director/GM

Memorandum

To: Salton Sea Authority Board of Directors
From: G. Patrick O'Dowd, Executive Director/GM
Date: July 20, 2023
Re: **Salton Sea Conservancy (SB 583 – Padilla)**

We reported at our last board meeting that substantive discussions have taken place regarding this significant legislation, and that while the language originally proffered by the Authority was not accepted by the bill author, extensive changes to the bill were negotiated and accepted. Significantly, the bill was amended to include the Authority's coordination and consultation on the implementation of its commission, and each member agency of the Authority will be afforded a board seat, with the Salton Sea Authority's President to serve as Vice Chair. In addition, all existing laws and agreements remain unaltered through the implementation of this new legislation. We are grateful for the Senator's collaborative spirit in working through these important issues.

We remain concerned about how this conservancy will be implemented and what impacts it will have on existing efforts including the 10-year plan and the feasibility study. Still, the agreement provides for a time to develop a Business Plan once the board is seated and a new general manager is hired, which should minimize those adverse impacts. One area where the bill could be further clarified is how the Authority and the conservancy will work together on community impacts. The Authority has long looked to the State (and now the conservancy too) to address impacts from the "shoreline in", addressing environmental and ecological changes resulting from the changes at the Sea, while the Authority leads efforts, in coordination and consultation with the State (and now the conservancy also) on community-centric impacts from the "shoreline out". And while this framework is not specifically codified in law, we believe it is inherent in both the nature of a conservancy and the jurisdictional authority of the Authority and its member agencies. It would be helpful to add clarifying language to the legislation in this regard.

The Authority's current position on this bill is "Oppose unless Amend". Given the changes agreed to by the author, we believe that continued opposition of this bill is inappropriate at this time. However, as expressed earlier Staff remains concerned that both the newness of this endeavor and the lack of clarity on certain issues give pause to moving to a full support position. Nonetheless, as negotiated Staff believes that the bill is far better than originally proposed and with work could be implemented in a manner that adds benefit to the restoration effort and addressing the ongoing operation of completed projects.

Recommendation:

Discretion of the Board.

Respectfully submitted,



G. Patrick O'Dowd
Executive Director/GM

Memorandum

To: Salton Sea Authority Board of Directors
From: G. Patrick O'Dowd, Executive Director /GM
Date: July 20, 2023

Re: Ad Hoc Committee Appointments for FY 2023-2024

The Salton Sea Authority JPA states that "The Commission or the Chairman may establish such committees as from time to time are deemed necessary as good for the Authority." The Board has long established the following four committees, and by direction of the President, the following individuals have been appointed to the committee or committees hereafter indicated:

Executive:

Committee Members for 2023/2024 (Per Bylaws):

Committee Chair: President Altrena Santillanes, Members: Vice-President Castulo Estrada

- Review policies and procedure as requested by staff.
- Review legislative proposals (Federal/State platforms).
- Review new programs and projects initiated by staff.
- Confer with General Manager regarding general activities of the Authority, as required.

Finance:

Chair-Appointed Committee Members for 2023/2024:

Committee Chair: Treasurer Yxstian Gutierrez Members: Director Thomas Torte, and Director Luis Plancarte

- Review the budget (proposed and current mid-year and yearly).
- Periodic review of bank statements, accounts payable and receivable, etc., and insurance and contractual commitments.
- Review procedures and practices of accounting.
- Review of audits and reports.

Personnel:

Chair-Appointed Committee Members for 2023/2024:

Committee Chair: Vice-President Castulo Estrada Members: President Altrena Santillanes and Secretary Gina Dockstader

- Review updated employee manual and procedures.
- Review employee labor compliance and contractual commitments.
- Review and suggest alternative solutions to personnel issues – as requested by Board and General Manager.
- Review job descriptions, employee needs, and compensation with General Manager.

Projects Committee:

Chair-Appointed Committee Members for 2023/2024:

Committee Chair: Director Ryan Kelley Members: Director V. Manuel Perez, Director Alex Cardenas, and Ex-Officio member CNRA Assistant Secretary Samantha Arthur.

- Review current projects including their status, pending contracts or identified issues of
- concern.
- Coordinate interagency cooperative planning to assure project outcomes are beneficial to all concerned.
- As requested or appropriate, attend outside meetings.
- Review and advise staff of member agencies of the impacts Authority projects may have in relation to member agencies' programs and operations.



MEMO

TO: Salton Sea Authority Board of Directors and G. Patrick O'Dowd
FROM: Lisa Moore
RE: **Federal Report**
DATE: July 20, 2023

Reclamation is currently engaged in two National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) reviews related to Colorado River operations and management that will affect the Salton Sea region. The first NEPA review — a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) on Near-Term Operations (2024-2026) — was paused at the end of May to evaluate an additional alternative proposed by California, Arizona and Nevada. The Authority prepared detailed comments on the draft SEIS as it proposed water conservation measures which would have had significant public health and environmental impacts on the Salton Sea region. There is no new information concerning that process to report, except that it is ongoing.

The second NEPA review — a full Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to consider post-2026 long-term operations and management — has begun the public scoping process. Reclamation held webinars relating to this new EIS process this past week to assist the public and stakeholders prepare comments which are due August 15, 2023. Whereas the draft SEIS proposes to govern water conservation and other operational features of Colorado River management for 3 years, the proposed new EIS and the guidelines it will create will govern operations well into the future. As a result, this EIS process is critically important to the Salton Sea region.

Public Scoping/EIS Process

Unlike the draft SEIS, which presents specific water conservation alternatives for the short-term and aims to assess the environmental impacts of those alternatives, the new EIS process will be more exhaustive. Reclamation presented its expectations for the public scoping process and allowed the public and stakeholders to ask questions at its July 17 webinar. Reclamation stated that the development of the EIS will be a multi-year process, with a full draft prepared for public comment by mid-2024 and to conclude with a NEPA Record of Decision (ROD) in mid-2026. Reclamation also indicated it is creating a new stakeholder engagement process for the EIS that it intends to roll out in the near future.

The first formal step in this process is NEPA scoping which by law directs Reclamation “to engage State, local, and tribal governments and the public in the early identification of concerns, potential impacts, relevant effects of past actions and possible alternative actions.” 43 CFR § 46.235. The scoping process will help set the stage for the issues the EIS will ultimately evaluate, including the development of alternatives to better manage Colorado River water supplies into the foreseeable future.

Framing Authority Comments

Unlike the draft SEIS, there are not yet specific alternatives to comment on yet in this process. Rather, Reclamation is seeking comments by August 15 on the scope of the issues that should be evaluated in the EIS, including: the duration of the new guidelines; Colorado River management improvements; ways to better provide predictability to water users; additional mechanisms to increase flexibility; and any other issues that should be considered. Comments will inform the way Reclamation determines the scope of the environmental impact analysis, including the affected area and geographic scope of assessing the environmental impacts of the ultimate water conservation alternatives it frames and evaluates in the EIS.

Reclamation will be required to publicly respond to scoping comments.

While this process differs from the SEIS process, the draft SEIS does provide some insights into comments the Authority may wish to make on the EIS. In particular, while the draft SEIS did include the Salton Sea region as part of the affected environment, it only considered the water supply and socioeconomic/agricultural impacts of the different proposed alternatives on our region. Reclamation did not consider the air quality, water quality or habitat impacts of its different alternatives on the Salton Sea region. Its environmental justice and tribal impact analyses did not consider the impacts of the proposed draft SEIS alternatives on these Salton Sea region communities.

Reclamation also did not perform a Clean Air Act conformity analysis in the draft SEIS. The Clean Air Act requires Reclamation to analyze the air quality impacts of its proposed action and alternatives to determine whether they will cause or contribute to new violations, worsen existing violations, or delay attainment with Clean Air Act standards in the Salton Sea region. The purpose of the Clean Air Act conformity rule is to ensure that federal actions do not cause local violations of Clean Air Act standards, and to ensure federal mitigation to avoid such violations, rather than placing that compliance burden on local governments. Notably in EPA's 2020 re-designation of Imperial County as in attainment with Clean Air Act particulate matter standards, the agency premised its decision on the assumption that any future water transfers from the Salton Sea region would include air quality mitigation measures.



TO: Salton Sea Authority Board of Directors
FROM: Oracio Gonzalez, Ollin Strategies
DATE: July 2023
SUBJECT: California State Advocacy

This memorandum provides a summary of state legislative and fiscal developments related to the Authority's state advocacy.

Fiscal

On July 10th, 2023, the Governor signed legislation enacting the budget agreement he reached with the legislature on the 2023-24 State Budget. As reflected in AB 102, the final budget agreement contained \$24.6 million for Salton Sea restoration projects. This figure was roughly half the amount the legislature had included in SB 101, legislation passed in June that reflected the budget agreement reached between the State Assembly and the State Senate.

As it relates to the balance of the Governor's \$220 million commitment to the Salton Sea, the final budget "shifted" \$139 million in Salton Sea restoration dollars to a general obligation bond. Specifically, the final budget clawed back and "shifted" \$89 million in Salton Sea restoration dollars passed as part of last year's budget, along with \$50 million the Governor proposed in January.

As noted in a previous report, there are two primary bond vehicles moving through the legislature:

- AB 1567 (Garcia), a measure that would place a \$15.9 billion general bond before voters on March 5, 2024. On May 26, the measure was amended to increase funding for Salton Sea restoration from \$240 million to \$400 million. Of these funds, the bond continues to set aside \$30 million for the Salton Sea Authority. In addition, the bond would set aside \$15 million for a Salton Sea conservancy. Measure is awaiting a hearing before the Senate Natural Resources Committee.
- SB 867(Allen), a measure that would place a \$15.5 billion general obligation bond before voters during a yet to be specified date. As proposed, the measure includes \$100 million for Salton Sea restoration activities. Measure was heard by the Assembly Water Parks and Wildlife Committee on June 20, 2023, and is now awaiting a hearing before the Assembly Natural Resources Committee.

Conservancy (SB 583)

On July 5, 2023, the Assembly Natural Resources Committee held a hearing on SB 583, Senator Padilla's legislation to create a Salton Sea Conservancy. Pursuant to the direction of the Board, the Authority had submitted an "Oppose Unless Amended" position letter and accompanying amendments to Senator Padilla and the members of the Assembly Natural Resources Committee. The committee integrated almost all of the Authority's proposed amendments into a larger set of amendments the committee Chair proposed to the bill. Mr. Padilla agreed to the amendments and the measure was passed to the Assembly Appropriations Committee.

A summary of the amendments taken in committee are below:

1. Conservancy's role was expanded to:
 - a) Support implementation of restoration projects in consultation with the Salton Sea Authority and oversee all Operations and Maintenance of completed restoration projects;
 - b) Support and promote projects that benefit the surrounding communities and complement restoration projects; and,
 - c) Coordinate with all levels of government responsible for mitigation under the QSA and planed Salton Sea mitigation efforts.
2. Restructure the board with 13 voting member, including membership for each of the Authority's member agencies, and 7 ex-officio members.
3. Require the Natural Resources Secretary and President of the Salton Sea Authority to serve as the permanent Chair and Vice Chair of the governing board, respectively.
4. Require Conservancy to develop a strategic plan to avoid duplication.
5. Provide that nothing in the bill will alter or limit commitments under the Salton Sea Management Plan, the Long-Range Plan, or State Water Board orders.