

**OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS**  
**SALTON SEA AUTHORITY**  
**BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING**  
**October 19, 2023**

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Salton Sea Authority (“Authority”) Board of Directors (“Board”) was called to order by Altrena Santillanes, President, at 10:00 a.m., October 19, 2023, at the North Shore Beach & Yacht Club, and via Zoom Webinar.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE** Led By President Santillanes

**ROLL CALL:**

**DIRECTORS PRESENT ON SITE**

Altrena Santillanes, President  
Gina Dockstader, Secretary  
Cástulo R. Estrada, Vice-President  
Ex-Officio Samantha Arthur

**AGENCY**

Torres Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians  
Imperial Irrigation District  
Coachella Valley Water District  
CNRA

**DIRECTORS PRESENT VIA ZOOM**

Luis A. Plancarte, Director

**AGENCY**

Imperial County

**DIRECTORS ABSENT**

John Aguilar, Director  
Ryan E. Kelley, Director  
Thomas Torte, Director  
V. Manuel Perez, Director  
Yxstian Gutierrez, Treasurer  
Alex Cárdenas, Director

**AGENCY**

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

**SALTON SEA AUTHORITY STAFF PRESENT**

G. Patrick O’Dowd, Executive Director/GM (in person)  
Carlos Campos, Best Best & Krieger, Legal Counsel (in person)  
Bob Hargreaves, Best Best & Krieger, Legal Counsel (Via Zoom)

## **MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC PRESENT**

On Site: Miguel Hernandez, CNRA, Juan DeLara, SSAC, Chuck Tobin, Burrtec and Frank Ruiz of Audubon.

Via Zoom: Jessica, Humes, IID, Mario Llanos, CNRA, Stephanie Holstege, Senior Environmental Scientist, Specialist, SWRCB, Jamie Asbury, General Manager, IID and 28 others.

### **II. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

There were no public comments.

### **III. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS**

Secretary Dockstader attended the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Salton Sea Stroll at Bombay Beach and was pleased with the event. She also requested an IID presentation be added to the next agenda regarding well and vegetation projects.

### **III. ITEMS FOR BOARD DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION**

#### A. CONSENT CALENDAR – Approve, Receive, and File

1. Minutes of Salton Sea Authority Board Meeting September 21, 2023
2. Salton Sea Authority Warrant Register Ratification for September 30, 2023
3. Salton Sea Authority Internal Financial Report for: 7/01/2022 – 08/31/2023
4. Approval 2024 Salton Sea Authority Board Meeting Calendar.

*On motion by Dockstader second by Plancarte, the Board approved the Consent Calendar to be received, and filed.*

***Approved by the following vote:***

***AYES:*** President Santillanes, Vice-President Estrada, Secretary Dockstader and Director Plancarte

***NOES:*** None

***ABSENT:*** Directors Kelley, Tortez, Aguilar, Perez and Gutierrez

***ABSTAINED:*** None

***MOTION PASSED:*** 7 – 0\*

*\*In keeping with the Salton Sea Authority Bylaws, a single director carries the vote of both directors of the agency when the second director of the same agency is absent.*

#### B. Presentation – Brian McNeece gave a presentation on the New River and the Tijuana River.

Vice-President Estrada thanked Dr. McNeece for the presentation and sharing data on the New River and Tijuana River, expressed concerns of inaction by Mexico in addressing these infrastructure problems. It was also mentioned that there could be significant reductions in flows from Mexico from growth in the Mexicali Valley.

- C. Update on Community Engagement, Outreach and Education - G. Patrick O’Dowd introduced Israel Cruz, who will be the Authority’s new Director of Outreach, Engagement & Education.

Mr. Cruz thanked Patrick for the introduction, he is a resident of Imperial Valley and is excited and honored to serve his community at this capacity.

D. Project Updates

- a. North Lake Demonstration Pilot Project  
Executive Director/GM, G. Patrick O’Dowd introduced Chuck Greely of Dudek who provided an update on the geotechnical work that is starting this week.

In response to Vice-President Estrada’s question regarding the project team make-up, GM O’Dowd advised Riverside County is the implementing agency, Douglas Ordonez serves as project manager and Juan Perez, COO of the county has taken a strong leadership role. Albert Webb serves as Riverside County’s technical advisor.

- b. Desert Shores, G. Patrick O’Dowd gave a brief but positive update. The Authority has drafted a contract with Gafcon that has been reviewed and expected to be signed shortly for consulting services oversee the CEQA process and help develop a comprehensive project scope, a precursor to a larger contract for construction management services. The State and the Bureau of Reclamation have been great partners and are reviewing a proposal for an expanded scope of work.

Vice President Estrada asked if they have determined to drill wells. GM O’Dowd responded that they will be drilling a test well to determine the quality and the water availability and will spec a production well once that process has been finalized. They are also testing seepage of the lake.

Tom Sephton provided alternate estimates for well drilling. He also provided information on 2 wells which could potentially provide useful data.

Ron Spears expressed his support for the Gafcon selection and offered that the Association could serve as the conduit between Gafcon and the residents.

Jasmyn Phillips expressed a desire to explore use of CVWD wells for project purposes, with potential cost savings.

#### **IV. REPORTS**

A. Federal

1. Federal Activities – Lisa Moore Lehman, Partner, Cultivating Conservation spoke about the passing of Senator Feinstein and the impact she had. A written report was also provided.
2. US Bureau of Reclamation – No Report

B. State

1. State Advocacy Report – Oracio Gonzalez, Principal, Ollin Strategies gave an update on SB619 (Padilla) and AB1593 (Garcia). A written report was also provided.
2. State of California – Mr. Miguel Hernandez, Public Affairs Officer, California Natural Resources Agency gave an update on current and past events. SSMP is hiring, they have a position open for an Engineer with water resources. Update on SSMP outreach, he will be presenting at City Council meetings throughout the region.
3. Salton Sea State Recreation Area Update on Activities – Andrew Ahlberg, Interim District Superintendent, California State Parks – No Report.

C. Local

1. Salton Sea Action Committee – Juan DeLara provided an update on the Bus Tours, UCR will be assisting the SSAC and will hopefully have one scheduled by next month. The SSAC is also working with UCR on the next Salton Sea Symposium, the projected date is October 2024.

D. Executive Director’s Report and Comments

1. G. Patrick O’Dowd, Executive Director/GM, Salton Sea Authority advised that the letter to Senator Padilla that the board discussed at the last meeting regarding consultation and community engagement was sent and we are continuing to engage with the Senator and his Staff on that and all other issues. Patrick also informed the Board and public that the Authority will be commemorating the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Salton Sea Authority at the Torres Martinez Tribe on November 16.

**V. ADJOURNMENT**

**NEXT MEETING TIME & LOCATION:**

The Salton Sea Authority Board is scheduled to meet on:

Thursday, November 16, 2023 at 10:00 a.m.

Torres Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians Gymnasium  
66725 Martinez Road  
Thermal, CA 92274  
760-397-0300

*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.*