



**OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS
SALTON SEA AUTHORITY
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
January 16, 2025**

I. CALL TO ORDER

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Salton Sea Authority ("Authority") Board of Directors ("Board") was called to order by Chair Dockstader, at 10:04 a.m., January 16, 2025 at the Coachella Valley Water District and via Zoom Webinar.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE Led by Director Singh

ROLL CALL:

DIRECTORS PRESENT ON SITE

Gina Dockstader, Secretary
Alex Cárdenas, Director
Martha Singh, Director
John Aguilar, Director
Cástulo R. Estrada, Vice-President
Ex-Officio Joe Shea

AGENCY

Imperial Irrigation District
Imperial Irrigation District
Imperial County
Coachella Valley Water District
Coachella Valley Water District
California Natural Resources Agency

DIRECTORS PRESENT VIA ZOOM

Ryan E. Kelley, Director

AGENCY

Imperial County - Arrived 11:02am

DIRECTORS ABSENT

Yxstian Gutierrez, Treasurer
V. Manuel Perez, Director

AGENCY

Riverside County
Riverside County

Torres Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians have not yet assigned (2) anyone to sit on the Salton Sea Authority Board of Directors.

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC PRESENT

- A. On Site: Pat Cooper, Deputy Chief of Staff, Riverside County, Juan DeLara, Salton Sea Action Committee, Trina Hamby, Imperial County Environmental Consumer Protection Manager Imperial County Public Health Department Environmental Health Division, John Coleman, Rhian Reyes, Campaign Organizer; Audubon California, Tara Brava Mulally, CV Strategies and Jim Barrett, General Manager, CVWD

Via Zoom: Partial List, due to recording issues.
Eric Reyes, Executive Director, Los Amigos dela Comunidad, Susie Ming, Chief, Coastal Section, Programs and Project Management Division USACE, Lisa Moore, Cultivating Conservation, and Michael Cohen, Pacific Institute.

II. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Eric Reyes, that the SEIS presentation be placed back on the agenda in light of the settlement between IID and the Sierra Club, commented on monitors and a lack of public data or where to find it.

III. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Director Cardenas requested and President Dockstader so instructed staff to place SEIS agenda for March.

Director Singh from the Imperial County Board of Supervisors was welcomed to the board by her fellow members. Director Singh expressed her appreciation and enthusiasm to advocate with fellow members and their respective agencies on behalf of the Salton Sea and surrounding communities.

President Dockstader introduced Joe Shea the new Assistant Secretary to the Salton Sea Policy. He shared his experience of having worked with Governor Newsome for the last 7 years, and has long been interested in Salton Sea issues. He looks forward to collaborating to advance our shared priorities.

IV. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE BOARD ACTION¹

- B. CONSENT CALENDAR – Approve, Receive, and File
1. Minutes of Salton Sea Authority Board Meeting November 14, 2024
 2. Salton Sea Authority Warrant Register Ratification – 11/1/2024 thru 11/30/2024
 3. Salton Sea Authority Internal Financial Report – October 31, 2024
 4. Ratification of Interim Controller for the Salton Sea Authority

On motion by Cardenas second by, Aguilar the Board approved the Consent Calendar to be received and filed.

Approved by the following vote:

AYES: 5

NOES: 0

¹ Consistent with the Salton Sea Authority bylaws, there being at least three of the five member agencies represented, when the second director of the same agency is absent a single director shall carry the vote of both directors.

ABSTAINED: 1 (not present at previous meeting)

MOTION PASSED: Unanimous

- C. Imperial Streams Salton Sea and Tributaries Feasibility Study update - Susan (Susie) M. Ming, PE Chief, Coastal Section, Programs and Project Management Division; USACE, LA District gave a brief update on the ISSS study objectives and recent accomplishments.

Director Cardenas appreciated the Gantt Chart and inquired about the budget. Ms. Ming advised project budget runs through 2028, and meet regularly Congressman Ruiz's staff in this regard.

Michael Cohen commented on the Alamo River as an early start candidate. He asked landownership issues, including IID lands and Geothermal companies. Ms. Ming noted the process was just initiated started in late 2024 and expect this will accelerate shortly. Director Cardenas and President Dockstader offered assistance regarding IID lands as appropriate.

- D. Audubon California tour / collaborative outreach - Rhian Reyes, Campaign Organizer; Audubon California gave a brief update on the tour scheduled for January 31st.

Vice-President Estrada noted a potential lost opportunity to collaborate with Audubon, working together to educate the public and request funding from electeds who may be invited to these events.

Executive Director, O'Dowd noted the Authority was brought in late in the planning process, and offered that future, advanced, collaborative planning for these events increase both efficiency and effectiveness.

Director Cardenas highlighted the upcoming Imperial Valley Salton Sea Conference scheduled for May 9, and requested staff reach out to Eric Reyes regarding the Authority's participation.

- E. Engagement, Outreach & Education update – Tara Bravo Mulally, Chief Strategy Officer; CV Strategies gave a brief update. Our goal is to create a centralized communication strategy for the Authority. Health concerns were identified as a high priority of each member agency, and the importance of public perception and understanding of existing and planned future efforts to address those concerns. President Dockstader requested a schedule of deliverables for the next meeting.

Jeremy Brooks and Lisa Moore both voiced the importance of expanded outreach and community support for current and future work.

O'Dowd stressed the importance of coordinating outreach efforts with state, federal, and local partners and stakeholders in a manner which enhances project engagement, education, and advocacy resources for the long term benefit of the Sea and region.

F. Salton Sea Conservancy Update (SB 583 / Prop 4) / Governor's 25/26 Budget
O'Dowd highlighted the \$10MM allocated to the Authority and the conservancy in Prop 4, then invited Mr. Shea to provide an update on the Governor's budget. Mr Shea discussed the \$147.6MM net (\$160MM appropriated less "bond costs") for climate bond funding for SSMP projects at the Sea. Regarding the Conservancy, the State is committed to putting out a proposal in the Spring of 2025. O'Dowd circled back to \$10MM, noting that collectively we need to ensure that it is used for maximum benefit by both the Authority and the state, and expressed the desire to collaborate to determine what that might look like.

Director Estrada asked for clarification, and Mr. Shea confirmed that at present it's a high level proposal for the \$160MM in the SSMP which is part of the \$10B climate bond that passed November 5th. The final proposal will outline how to spend these SSMP funds. Noting the separate \$10MM pot for Prop 4 which sets the funds aside specifically for 1. the Salton Sea Conservancy, and 2. The Salton Sea Authority. Executive Director O'Dowd reminded the Board and Mr. Shea of the history of negotiations on the bond, where historically these funds were broken out into two separate baskets – one for the Authority, one for the conservancy, but in the end they were consolidated for mutual benefit. O'Dowd also noted that it is incumbent upon the state and the Authority to reach consensus as to how those funds are best utilized, and by whom.

G. Project Updates

1. North Lake Pilot Demonstration Project

O'Dowd gave a brief update. Working with the engineers to develop a revised schedule and budget, we are nearing a completion date on that schedule and budget.

2. Desert Shores – O'Dowd gave a brief update. Gafcon and the Authority engaged Nicklaus Engineering to do the geo technical assessment of the finger lakes on how to best approach restoring that project. It is comprised of 100s of residential lots, and access is required for testing to inform and advance design efforts.

3. Bombay Beach - Jeremy gave a brief update. The Bureau has been funding Audubon and were allocated \$2MM to design the Bombay Beach project. The state and Audubon have been working very closely on this project, just recently the State took the lead. And is working with Audubon to push plans forward. Hopefully by year end they will be sending out a contract/bid. The State is securing \$5MM from the Water Board and \$2MM from Congress as requested by Congressman Ruiz, all put in their FY budget to help with this project.

V. REPORTS

A. Federal

1. Federal Activities – Lisa Moore Lehman, Partner, Cultivating Conservation gave a brief update on the new congress.
2. US Bureau of Reclamation – Jeremy Brooks, gave a brief update. The commitments agreement from December 2022 is materially complete, the Bureau obligated \$249MM and just obligated another \$75MM to SCH and \$2MM to IID. Will have more material on new projects coming up at the next meeting.

B. State

1. Executive Director O’Dowd noted that strategies are being developed by Authority staff to address this need on a continuing basis.
2. State of California – Mr. Miguel Hernandez, Public Affairs Officer, California Natural Resources Agency gave a brief update. Working on 150 acres of expansion at the SCH and construction of a new berm. Community outreach, they had 50 outreach opportunities in 2024.
3. Salton Sea State Recreation Area Update on Activities – Taylour Unzicker, Ocotillo Wells District shared a power point on the visitation data from 2019-2024, with 33K day use visitors and 16K overnight in 2019 and 19K day visitors and 10K overnight in 2024.

C. Local

1. Salton Sea Action Committee – Juan DeLara, SSAC President gave a brief update. Working with Audubon on the January 31, bus tour and very excited to be working with CV Strategies on outreach opportunities.

- D. Executive Director’s Report and Comments - G. Patrick O’Dowd, Executive Director/GM, Salton Sea Authority, O’Dowd gave a brief update. Director Perez asked Tom Sephton to do a presentation on his desalination project at the next meeting. O’Dowd is setting up a tour at Mr. Sephton’s facility with board members along with some state and federal representatives after our next board meeting March 20.

VI. ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING

- A. Water Desalination / Reuse – Tom Sephton
- B. Draft Salton Sea Authority 25/26 Budget

VII. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting was adjourned at 12:04 p.m.

NEXT MEETING TIME & LOCATION:

The Salton Sea Authority board is scheduled to meet on:

Thursday, March 20, 2025, at 10:00 a.m.

Imperial County BOS Chambers

940 W. Main Street

El Centro, CA 92243

(442) 265-1020

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 at the front desk at 82500 Highway 111, Suite 4 Indio, CA 92201.