



OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS
SALTON SEA AUTHORITY
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
March 20, 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 10:03 a.m., March 20, 2025 at the Imperial County BOS Chamber and via Zoom Webinar.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE Led by Director Singh

ROLL CALL

DIRECTORS PRESENT ON SITE

Gina Dockstader, Secretary
Director Singh
Ryan E. Kelley, Director
John Aguilar, Director
Alex Cárdenas, Director

AGENCY

Imperial Irrigation District
Imperial County
Imperial County
Coachella Valley Water District
Imperial Irrigation District

DIRECTORS PRESENT VIA ZOOM

V. Manuel Perez, Director
Cástulo R. Estrada, Vice-President
Ex-Officio Joe Shea

AGENCY

Riverside County
Coachella Valley Water District
California Natural Resources Agency

DIRECTORS ABSENT

Yxstian Gutierrez, Treasurer
Joseph Mirelez

AGENCY

Riverside County
Torres Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC PRESENT

On Site: Eric Reyes, Los Amigos de la Comunidad, Larissa Sinclair, Miguel Hernandez, CNRA, Dylan Mohamed, IID, Vickie Doyle, IID.

Via Zoom: Pat Cooper, Riverside County, Taylour Unzicker, CA State Parks, Tom Sephton, I am IronDad, Paul Najar, Gafcon, Tina Shields, IID, Aydee Palomino, Alianza, Mario Llanos, Pat Cooper, Deputy Chief of Staff, Supervisor Perez, Evon Willhoff, DWR, Jim Barrett, CVWD, Michael Cohen, Pacific Institute and 9 others.

II. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Miss Sinclair moved to North Shore and bought a house with her husband. She would like to see more to preserve the culture.

- Visitors center
- Maps
- Online information
- Reopening strategic campgrounds, like Bombay beach
- Shoreline access
- Would like to know where the Salton Sea history museum is located.

III. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

President Dockstader requested that the completed board packet be distributed sooner. Executive Director O'Dowd advised that the agenda is distributed not less than 72 hours prior to meeting start (per Brown Act requirements), and that agenda-item-specific material is posted to the website when it comes available, much of which is posted concurrent with or shortly after the distribution of the agenda. In order to ensure a complete board packet, staff has historically prepared and distributed a "complete board packet" no less than 24 hours prior to meeting start, with material received thereafter (including presentation material) added supplementally to the website.

Dockstader also inquired about our association memberships, and in particular CSDA.

Treasurer Kelley gave a brief update on Yale University visiting the Sea for the 4th time in 7 years. Their project focuses on sustainable living, nomad culture, landscaping and environmental infrastructure.

IV. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE BOARD ACTION

A. CONSENT CALENDAR – Approve, Receive, and File

1. Minutes of Salton Sea Authority Board Meeting January 16, 2025
2. Salton Sea Authority Warrant Register Ratification for 12/31/24, 1/31/25, and 2/28/25
3. Salton Sea Authority Internal Financial Report for the seven months ended January 31, 2025

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

Approved by the following vote:

AYES: 8

NOES: 0

ABSTAINED: 0

MOTION PASSED: Unanimous

- B. North Lake Pilot Demonstration Project Proposition 68 Grant Maturity Date Extension Ratification. O'Dowd gave a brief update on the technical challenges. Director Cardenas asked if the objective was to achieve a certain percent complete with design, and O'Dowd advised that the more important task was to assess the project feasibility based on availability of financial resources.

Director Aguilar asked for clarification on the dates and was informed the current extension is through December 31, 2025 but will most likely be extended again if the project proves achievable.

Director Perez voiced his frustration with the state and concerned that they are lacking staff capacity. Perez questioned at what point do we decide to step away from this project, but also expressed continuing concerns about the conservancy and the potential for confusion and inefficiency.

Cardenas asked if there was a project management issue. O'Dowd stated that Riverside County is leading the effort and together we can be successful if the project is deemed feasible and the resources are available. Cardenas asked about listed and threatened species and was informed this project is covered under the SSMP environmental approvals.

Joe Shea shared that his assessment with 3.5 months being on the job that we still need to answer if there is enough water to support this project. We continue to engage with consultants and state techs teams to find some of those answers, but we've got more work ahead of us.

On motion by Cardenas second by Aguilar, the Board approved Proposition 68 Grant Maturity Date Extension Ratification

Approved by the following vote:

AYES: 8

NOES: 0

ABSTAINED: 0

MOTION PASSED: Unanimous

- C. Desert Shores Restoration – Gafcon Contract Amendment Approval. O'Dowd noted the technical challenges the project has long faced, and the recent hiring of Nicklaus Engineering for geotechnical work. Gafcon has been overseeing on behalf of the Authority under a contract that has exhausted current funding, and staff is requesting a 25K increase to be funded from the

grant. Paul Najar (Gafcon) stated that the channel survey was completed by Nicklaus, with 15 locations identified for testing on parcels surrounding the channels. Letters were sent to the property owners, and the community of Desert Shores was very helpful in assisting in the effort of contacting these owners. John Gay is submitting permit for drilling, which will commence early April. President Dockstader and Director Cardenas commented.

On motion by Singh second by Kelley, the Board approved the Gafcon Contract Amendment

Approved by the following vote:

AYES: 8

NOES: 0

ABSTAINED: 0

MOTION PASSED: Unanimous

- D. IID Presentation – System Conservation Implementation Agreement (SCIA) – Dylan Mohamed, Water Conservation Analyst, gave a presentation on the subject (presentation slides included herewith).

Treasurer Kelley inquired as to the status on the federal funding obligations and was informed that some funds were frozen, but that the funding for 2025 was received while IID continues to advocate for the balance of funding to be released. Kelley also asked about the Economic Analysis on DIP water conservation on farms, stating his belief that IID and growers will benefit but the economic loss for the loss of productivity will not be addressed. He was informed that this is a voluntary program, and IID did not evaluate that specific issue and had no information.

Eric Reyes echoed Treasurer Kelley's concerns and further expressed concern that the program may have human and environmental impact and felt the Authority should take a stand in this regard.

In response Director Cardenas stated that USBR and IID completed an environmental assessment under NEPA that fully analyzed the impacts and was signed off by both agencies covering the temporary conservation measures. Also, legal actions brought in this regard were dismissed.

President Dockstader stated that per USBR all the SCIA funds were released, and that this program helped the farmers pay for their fertilizer, equipment and other bills.

Kelley responded to restate his concern that there was no economic impact statement in the report and that there is a significant impact in moving this amount of water out of the valley. It will benefit the Colorado River users and states but does not see how it benefits the people that live here.

Aguilar provided additional comments.

- E. Vertical Tube Evaporator, Multi-Effect Distillation (VTE-MED) presentation - Tom Sephton gave a presentation. See attached
- F. Salton Sea Authority 2025/2026 Draft Operating Budget (First Presentation). O'Dowd presented a Draft Budget for 2025-26, noting that revenues and expenses did not change materially from prior year. No project dollars were included in the budget as they are pass through and do not material impact operations. This reflects the sources and uses of Authority operations. We are recommending that no member contribution increase for the coming year, and will request final approval at our May meeting.
- G. Community Engagement Update (Video) Tara Mulally, CV Strategies, Chief Strategy Officer. Patrick spoke on behalf of Tara Mulally and gave a brief update on the work that has been done so far. We also handed out a list of "key messages" and a leave behind pamphlet. We are asking the board to review, comment and request any changes. Ms. Mulally was unable to attend in person due to a long planned conflict, but a video update was provided which is viewable on the meeting web page.
- H. Imperial Valley Salton Sea Summit - Eric Reyes gave a brief update on the SS Summit and the scheduled speakers.
- I. Conservancy (SB 583)
 - 1. Implementation, O'Dowd gave a brief update. The Authority has a significant role, one-third of the Conservancy Board will comprise of the Salton Sea member agencies including the current Authority President, and along with the Assistant Secretary (also ex officio on the Authority Board), who will Serve on the conservancy board.
 - 2. Proposition 4 Allocations, O'Dowd advised that there is \$10MM in Prop 4 funds identified for the Authority and the Conservancy. Cardenas noted that we are unrepresented in Sacramento, requested an update. O'Dowd reminded the board of the action they took to pause state advocacy to develop a communications strategy, and that effort was near completion. A task force was also discussed. Staff was directed to pursue this issue prior to next board meeting.

V. REPORTS

A. Federal

1. Federal Activities – Lisa Moore Lehman, Partner, Cultivating Conservation gave a brief update on the D.C. trip that Patrick and President Dockstader took and met with legislative with Lisa Moore.
2. US Bureau of Reclamation – Jeremy Brooks – NO REPORT

B. State

1. State Advocacy – O'Dowd gave an update V1.I.
2. State of California – Mr. Miguel Hernandez, Public Affairs Officer, California Natural Resources Agency Gave a brief update on current and past events. Annual report will be released in the next 10 days
3. Salton Sea State Recreation Area Update on Activities – Cassandra Van Dyne, Interpreter & Educator, California State Parks, gave a brief update. Visitation #'s were up. In Jan and Feb, day use was at 6,050, a 23% increase from 2024 and 4,424 campers, a 29% increase from 2024. They are expanding their programming on Salton Sea History talks, multiple K-12 visits and collages. Weekend Bird walks have been added. They welcome any information from the board that they can share.
4. Salton Sea Action Committee – Alan Pace, SSAC President – No Report

- C. Executive Director's Report and Comments - G. Patrick O'Dowd, Executive Director/GM, Salton Sea Authority, O'Dowd covered throughout the meeting.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 12:30 pm

NEXT MEETING TIME & LOCATION:

The Salton Sea Authority board is scheduled to meet on:

Thursday, May 22, at 10:00 a.m.

at

Coachella Valley Water District
Steve Robbins Administration Bldg.
75515 Hovley Lane East

Palm Desert, CA 92260

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 located at 82500 Highway 111, Suite 4 Indio, CA 92201.