



**OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS
SALTON SEA AUTHORITY
BOARD OF DIRECTORS' MEETING
July 16, 2026**

I. CALL TO ORDER

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Salton Sea Authority ("Authority") Board of Directors ("Board") was called to order by Chair Mirelez, at 10:02 a.m., July 16, 2026, at Coachella Valley Water District and via Zoom Webinar.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ROLL CALL

DIRECTORS PRESENT ON SITE

AGENCY

Joseph Mirelez, President
Cástulo R. Estrada, Vice-President
Martha Singh, Secretary
John Aguilar, Director
Rosemarie Morreo, Director
V. Manuel Perez, Director
Ex-Officio Joe Shea

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

DIRECTORS PRESENT VIA ZOOM

AGENCY

DIRECTORS ABSENT

AGENCY

Yxstian Gutierrez, Director
Ryan E. Kelley, Treasurer

Riverside County
Imperial County

Chairman Mirelez asked if there any changes to the agenda, there were none.

On motion by Aguilar, second by Estrada, the Board approved the Agenda.

Approved by the following vote:

AYES: 6

NOES: 0

ABSTAINED: 0

MOTION PASSED: Unanimous

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC PRESENT

On Site: Alex Schriener, Earth Systems, Michael Placencia, Colorado River Basin Regional Water Quality Control Board, Nick Romo, Cruz Strategies, Glenn Farrel,

Via Zoom: Tom Sephton, Sephton Water Tech, JB Hamby, IID, Miguel Hernandez, CNRA, Michael Cohen, Pacific Institute, Diana Navarro, Mario Llanos, Jim Barrett, CVWD, Jenny Ross, L. Mathews, Alan Pace, SSAC, Jasmyn Phillips, Lauren Elachi, Evon Willhoff, DWR, Tina Shields, IID, Ed Millard.

II. CHANGES TO AGENDA

There were no changes to the agenda.

III. PUBLIC COMMENTS

No Comments

IV. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

No Comments

V. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE BOARD ACTION

A. CONSENT CALENDAR – Approve, Receive, and File

1. Minutes of Salton Sea Authority Board Meeting 6/18/2026
2. Salton Sea Authority Warrant Register Ratification for June 30, 2026
3. Salton Sea Authority Internal Financial Report for June 30, 2026
4. Extension and Modification of Federal Advocacy Contract
5. Appointment of Committee Assignments for 2026/2027

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

Approved by the following vote:

AYES: 6

NOES: 0

ABSTAINED: 0

MOTION PASSED: Unanimous

- B. Aron King, SoCal Area Manager, Lower CO Region, USBR – intro and remarks. Mr King introduced himself, gave a brief overview of his assignments. Director Estrada asked if he would be attending our meetings frequently, Mr. King, logistical alignments favor an in-person presence.

C. Imogen Lee, UCLA Water Quality Research and Grant Request.

Executive Director O'Dowd introduced Ms. Lee. Ms. Lee gave a brief presentation on water quality, and grant funding for research. O'Dowd requested the board ratify a non-financial engagement with Ms. Lee to develop her project and pursue its completion.

On motion by Perez, second by Estrada, the Board approved the grant for funding in a non-financial way.

Approved by the following vote:

AYES: 8

NOES: 0

ABSTAINED: 0

MOTION PASSED: Unanimous

D. Torres Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians Post 2026 Colorado River Operations consultation request.

Chairman Mirelez updated the Authority that he has been unable to obtain a callback to schedule a nation-to-nation consultation and requested the Authority's assistance.

On motion by Perez, second by Estrada, the Board approved Resolution 26-04, of the Salton Sea Authority Supporting Meaningful Government to Government Consultation with the Torres Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indian Tribe.

Approved by the following vote:

AYES: 8

NOES: 0

ABSTAINED: 0

MOTION PASSED: Unanimous

E. Strategic Plan Implementation

1. Review and consider adoption of Salton Sea Framework of Assurance

Executive Director O'Dowd introduced this item and asked for consideration of the Salton Sea Framework of Assurance.

On motion by Perez, second by Estrada, the Board approved that the Torres Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indian Tribe request that the Authority assist in scheduling a nation to nation consultation.

Approved by the following vote:

AYES: 8

NOES: 0

ABSTAINED: 0

MOTION PASSED: *Unanimous*

2. Authorize distribution of DOI/CNRA/Authority MOU Term Sheet (Discussion Draft) to inform existing and future joint efforts.

Executive Director O'Dowd introduced this item and asked for authorization from the board to distribute DOI Term Sheet. Director Aguilar asked for clarification on when this framework was adopted, O'Dowd stated Strategic Plan directed the creation of this framework. Director Perez asked that an Ad-Hoc committee be put together in the next 90 days.

On motion by Estrada, second by Morreo, the Board approved the distribution of the DOI Term sheet.

Approved by the following vote:

AYES: 8

NOES: 0

ABSTAINED: 0

MOTION PASSED: *Unanimous*

- F. Salton Sea Conservancy Executive Manager Recruitment - Secure Board direction with respect thereto and discuss possible Salton Sea Authority collaboration.

Executive Director O'Dowd reviewed the Conservancy's history and raised concerns about CNRA's Executive Officer job posting potentially exceeding the Conservancy's original purpose. Mr. Shea of CNRA invited further discussion and emphasized that collaboration would develop as both entities are established and staffed.

Director Aguilar expressed concern that the Authority could be overlooked in future discussions, citing a recent Salton Sea speaker series as an example.

Chairman Mirelez noted that no action would be taken. O'Dowd stated staff would continue discussions with CNRA and that the Board's direction would be reflected in the minutes.

- G. Project Related Activity
 1. USACE Feasibility Study
 - a. Funding
 - b. WRDA 2026
 - c. RAPID Implementation

Director O'Dowd emphasized that the ongoing efforts are critical to implementing the feasibility study and securing long-term congressional support. He noted the project will span multiple administrations and priorities, requiring a durable federal, state, and local partnership.

2. North Lake Pilot Demonstration Project
 - a. Update on reallocation of Prop 68 proceeds

Mr. Farrel of GF Advocacy reported that the June 29 state budget included \$16.2 million in Prop 68 funding to DWR for the North Lake project and \$600,000 to CNRA for an agreement supporting the Authority's continued involvement in project delivery.

3. Desert Shores
 - a. Update on Legal for Site Control (GAFCON), Executive Director O'Dowd gave a brief update. The Authority and Gafcon hired a law firm to craft an easement agreement that should be completed in the next 2 weeks.

VI. REPORTS

A. Federal

1. Federal Activities – Lisa Moore Lehman, Partner, Cultivating Conservation – Please refer to her report at www.saltonseas.com/meetings
2. US Bureau of Reclamation – Aron King, SoCal Area Mgr., Lower CO Region, introduced himself and gave an update at the beginning of the meeting.

B. State

1. State Advocacy - Nick Romo, Cruz Strategies and Glen Farrel, GF Advocacy, Mr. Farrel gave a brief update on Prop 4 allocations that are unaddressed at this point until August, when the legislature returns from recess.
2. State of California –

Mr. Hernandez announced the July 23 Secretary Speaker Series led by Secretary Crowfoot. Mr. Shea provided updates on state projects, noting AB 109 implementation, continued work on the North Lake projects, and efforts to maintain flexibility in bond funding. He also reported that the \$80–\$90 million Cane Spring project is progressing toward construction bidding by year-end, with another SCH ponds groundbreaking planned.

C. Salton Sea State Recreation Area Update on Activities – Ray Lennox, Colorado District Superintendent. – No Report

D. Local

1. Salton Sea Action Committee – Alan Pace, SSAC President, announced the Salton Sea Summit that will be held October 16&17 at UCR.

E. Executive Director's Report and Comments - G. Patrick O'Dowd, Executive Director/GM, Salton Sea Authority – No Report

VII. ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING

List of people Executive Director O'Dowd will be reaching out to in the next 90 days for the Ad-Hoc Committee to discuss the Framework of Assurance of a budget.

Director Perez mentioned having a symposium.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting Adjourned at 11:20 a.m.

NEXT MEETING TIME & LOCATION:

The Salton Sea Authority board is scheduled to meet on:

Thursday, September 17, at 10:00 a.m.

at

Imperial County BOS Chamber

940 W Main Street

El Centro, CA 92243