

BAJA SUB-AREA ADVISORY COMMITTEE

**DRAFT** MEETING MINUTES

MARCH 15, 2019

10:00 am

**1. Call to Order and Roll Call**

Chairperson Ellen Johnson called the meeting to order at 10:02am and welcomed guests and committee members.

Committee members present: Ellen Johnson, Jeff Gaastra, Lee Hiatt, John Solomon, Netta DeJong.

Absent: Alisa Ellsworth – CDF&W - Attempts to have Alisa present via phone connection were unsuccessful.

- 2. Guests:** Jesse Ramirez-GSWC, Perry Dahlstrom-GSWC, Steven Ashton-City of Victorville/Centro SAC, Alex Garcia-City of Victorville/Centro SAC, Doug Matthews-City of Victorville, Ted Stimpfel, Veronica Shaw, Robert Shaw, Tony Walters-MDRCD, Luis Cortes-MDRCD, Jim Johnson

**3. Approval of the Agenda**

The Agenda was approved

**4. Approval of Minutes**

The minutes from the December 18, 2018, meeting were approved

**5. Old/New Business**

**A.** Chairperson Ellen Johnson asked if the BSAC would consider developing bylaws to address issues that may arise, such as excessive absences by a committee member.

Committee members felt that developing bylaws was unnecessary so no motion was made.

**B.** The BSAC was asked to consider supporting the minimal producers in their attempt to have a chance to address the court. Currently, the judge will not accept input from minimal producers who are not a party to the judgment. Ted Stimpfel commented that he has put in a request to MWA/Watermaster to have the minimal producers recognized by the court. He feels that it is improper to have the minimal producers ignored and that the current policy should be challenged, as they want to be a part of the solution. It

was mentioned that the minimals are under the jurisdiction of the MWA. They were supposed to be assessed and identified, but this has not been done.

Chairperson Ellen Johnson entertained a motion for BSAC to recommend to Watermaster that minimal producers be allowed to participate and be heard in court. It was stated that the best the committee can do is to make a recommendation. A discussion followed: It was said that from a policy standpoint, the minimal producers have not been ramped down nor have they been assessed on their water use by having a meter on their well. It was suggested that the minimal producers should address the members of the Watermaster Board in getting a voice. It was noted that most minimals across the state are allowed only 2 acre feet, as opposed to the 10 acre feet allowed under the judgment.

A motion was made to support the minimals in their quest to be heard. There was no second, and therefore, no vote.

Director Jim Ventura felt that he could not attend our meeting because of a conflict of interest. It was mentioned that this is because this meeting included the Centro SAC, which made it a dual meeting. For future meetings, the BSAC could invite Watermaster Staff and/or Directors.

### **C. Comments and/or Objections to Watermaster**

- a. The change in Production Safe Yield shows 8,490 a/f taken away in Baja. The question was asked - Why now? Is the proper information being used? Baja was very close to meeting PSY before this change occurred. The Hydrologist for the Recreational Lakes Association is taking a close look at these new numbers. We would like to know how these new numbers were calculated. There is a concern that too many assumptions are being used, and more data is needed. More information is essential to determine what is actually going on with water flows. Robert Wagner's report shows that downstream obligations are being met. According to Perry Dahlstrom with GSWC, total water production in Centro has gone down and yet they have seen a 20 foot drop in pumping levels. It appears that Centro is not getting the recharge – assumptions and estimates are being used to calculate data. This is reasonable, but not verified or proven. There are large gaps between the locations of the gages, and even then, the gages are not an exact science, since berms can prevent water from reaching the gage, as has been seen in the past. In the upstream area, the Mojave River is compromised with sand dikes being used to slow the flow of water. A geophysical study in the area of the Waterman Fault would be helpful, with monitoring wells giving a realistic picture of water flows and amounts.

- b.** Watermaster needs to put a halt to the rampdown. We do not agree with Engineer Robert Wagner's numbers and feel that the data is incomplete. A motion was made and passed unanimously to request more data for the Baja and Centro Subareas, to better understand Watermaster's assumptions as we look for validation of the information presented by the Watermaster Engineer. Jeff Gaastra will see about arranging a workshop to find out how the new numbers were determined. Should Baja be getting more water from Centro? Are the historical flows lacking in Baja? Aerial photos are not always accurate – boots on the ground give a much more accurate account of water usage. The specifics of surface flow and sub-surface flow was brought up. Pumping outside of the judgment is a problem and cannot be enforced, as MWA has no regulatory powers and San Bernardino County does not want to establish a conservation ordinance, so there are no consequences.
- c.** Jeff Gaastra presented his proposal for a “differential rampdown”, including a “3 tier plan” and a “5 tier plan”. Larger pumpers would be paying more. He mentioned that there are a lot of paper rights on the books but the water is not being pumped, so he did not include those numbers in his equation. A motion was made for the Baja SAC to ask Watermaster to consider a Differential Rampdown, and strongly suggest that the Court look at the Differential Rampdown. The motion passed - 3 to 2. The Motions will be circulated and presented to Watermaster at the March 27, 2019, meeting.

Tony Walters stated that there will be an outdoor water conservation presentation in Victorville on March 23 and a Water Conservation Fair in Joshua Tree on March 31.

The representatives from the Centro SAC were thanked for attending.

Workshop dates will be determined.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:30pm