

DIRECTOR REPORT AB 1234

Director Name: Jeff Ford

Conference/Seminar Name: Fall 2022 ACWA Conference

Date: 11/29-12/1/2022

To Be Presented at Next Regularly Scheduled Board Meeting on:
12/20/2022

Subject Matter of Conference/Seminar: ACWA Conference

Speakers and Persons of Interest in Attendance: Water professionals, government representatives, consultants, and others, from numerous entities in California.

Highlights:

International Program – Marco Sermoneta, Consul General of Israel to the Pacific Northwest addressed how Israel has addressed water management challenges. He believes that Israel benefits from centralized control of water management and that the country has gained efficiency with the elimination of middlemen (sic) in the provision of water. 50% of the country's supply of potable water comes from desalination, and the capital costs are less than half of those in the US. The country is a leader in atmospheric water generation also, though the Chair of the Water Resources Board, later in the conference, stated that he doesn't believe that it will be a significant source for California due to the lack of scalability.

Legal Program – Key Appellate Court decisions in the last year and their effects on water agencies were presented by a panel of attorneys from the private sector. Numerous cases were discussed, but of note was the upcoming SCOTUS of Sackett v. EPA which will revisit what constitutes “jurisdictional waters” under the Federal Clean Water Act, the case has been in the courts for over a decade. In general, the next session of SCOTUS will have several cases of import to water agencies. Also, there will likely be state legislation to clarify the Almond v. CDFW case that declared that bees are fish for purposes of the California Endangered Species Act. In general, there was a recommendation that all agencies take an active role in the next state and federal legislative sessions.

Statewide Issues Forum – Unpacking California’s Water Supply Strategy
Panel discussed the loss of 10% of California’s supply portfolio due to “aridification” of climate and proposals in the Water Resilience Portfolio to address the loss. Some of the proposals include streamlining of CEQA for water development, new standards for indoor and outdoor water losses, and the production of new regulations for direct potable reuse of recycled water.
Groundwater recharge has “the most ink” in the plan, with a greater state role in the hopes to better capture more water from episodic atmospheric

ivers. The state is also making \$350M available for groundwater recharge/storage projects.

Water Industry Trends – The recent listing of Southern California Steelhead and Rainbow Trout pursuant to the California Endangered Species Act could greatly affect water projects within the affected watersheds, including the lower Santa Clara River. This has the potential to impact both downstream water purveyors (e.g., United Water Conservation District) and flood control districts which maintain channels with a connection to the ocean (e.g., LA County Flood Control District). United Water Conservation District is challenging the listing by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. The listing also underscores the critical nature of maintaining the dry gap in the Santa Clara River between Blue Gap and the confluence with Piru Creek in order to protect upstream species and not impact SCVWA’s (and other agencies’) operations in the Upper Santa Clara River.