

DIRECTOR AB 1234 REPORT

Director Name: Kathye Armitage

Meeting Attended: Webinar: Drought - Are We Ready?

Date of Meeting: April 29, 2021

Location: Virtual

Board Meeting to Be Presented At: May 4, 2021

Points of Interest:

- Host: Southern California Water Coalition
- Guest speakers:
 - Karla Namath
 - Director, California Department of Water Resources
 - Erik Ekdahl
 - Deputy Director, California State Water Resources Control Board
 - Newsha Ajami
 - Director of Urban Water Policy, Stanford University Water in the West Program
 - Heather Dyer
 - General Manager, San Bernardino Valley Municipal Water District
 - Paul Cook
 - General Manager, Irvine Ranch Water District
- Key points
 - Perspectives on drought conditions at the state level
 - We are in better shape now (as we are likely dealing with another series of dry years) than we were entering the drought period in 2014 due to lessons learned from that time
 - We have better information that will help us deal with groundwater supplies and help monitor well conditions thanks to the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act
 - We have lessons learned about how to help rural community systems focus resources this time
 - HOWEVER, communities that had a hard time during the last drought still haven't recovered
 - We need to do better working toward long-term drought resilience
 - Last week, Governor Newsom announced drought emergencies in two counties (Sonoma and Mendocino), and signed an Executive Order for all state agencies to accelerate drought planning
 - We need to distinguish between drought and drought emergency
 - Conditions are drier now than in 2014/2015

- Exceptional hydrology in the Feather River watershed
- This year's reduced snowpack melted much faster and got absorbed by the thirsty ground/soil
- This year, the water level at Lake Oroville will likely dip to historic lows
- Southern California agencies will be leaning on other local supplies and putting storage investments to use
- For the first time in 40 years, the state had to issue water right curtailments
- This is a wake-up call for community members, agencies, and government to plan and implement long-term climate resilience
- There is a need for better data and accounting
 - When we are in dry years and every drop of water counts, good data helps with decision-making
- Perspectives on drought conditions from academia
 - Suggestion to look at the issue in a different way
 - During the last 100 years, more than 40% of the time conditions in California put us past drought threshold
 - Important to understand that we have had more dry periods than wet periods
 - Need to shift understanding of what is "normal"
 - Maybe normal is this perpetual drought and dry conditions
 - We have to manage our water resources with that perspective
 - Dry conditions have been here and they are here to stay
 - Highlights importance of being in constant proactive behavior
 - The 2014/2015 drought was important for the state
 - It was a dry and HOT drought in 2014/2015
 - It took it to a different level
 - Implemented the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act and made progress because of it
 - Every drought we've had in the past led to certain legislative actions that have been positive and made us more resilient
 - Created a conservation way of life
 - As a state, we don't experience drought the same all over and it's important to have a regional perspective
 - Different areas experience different effects based on what supplies they depend on
 - It's a myth that Southern California experiences the greatest effects since all areas are hit hard in their own ways
 - Agencies in Southern California have been doing their work to secure water in different ways and the region is starting to see some resiliency because of that work
 - HOWEVER, we are not done - still much more work needs to be done
- Perspectives from State Water Contractors
 - The 2014/2015 drought provided a push for those on the ground to come together and find solutions
 - One area started a groundwater council, and pooled funds to create a regional water banking system

- There is a great need for more storage (above and below ground) and collaborative pre-planning for future unknown conditions
- Opinion: If we use them creatively, smart above ground storage can improve conditions for fish habitats
- Suggestions
 - More water banking
 - Partnerships between Northern California, Central Valley, and Southern California where we can “park” water
 - We know we’ll have more wet years with a lot of precipitation in short amounts of time so we need a way to capture that
- Solutions are not easy or cheap and there are seemingly competing needs (agriculture, environment, and residents/businesses), so how do we find that elusive “triple win”?

- Perspectives from water retailers
 - A lot has been learned since 2014/2015
 - Previous drought woke them up in recognizing their roles
 - Drought vs. emergency drought became more clear
 - Adopted new mantra of being water efficient all of the time and for the long-term
 - Different from conservation, which is hopefully short-term
 - Efficiency is now what they do all the time, and conservation is what they do during a drought emergency
 - Ongoing dialogue with customers
 - Use rate structure to communicate
 - Explain portfolio with different water sources
 - Some optimism
 - Practices adopted during 2014/2015 drought haven’t stopped
 - Biggest impact they found was finding water outside
 - A lot of their customers removed their lawns
 - There is still room to become more efficient
 - One-sided solutions won’t fix all
 - Promote efficiency and be ready to make adjustments during times of conservation
 - Important to know where to “turn the dial” when the time comes
 - Demand management
 - Demand management is key and should be the central part of the discussion
 - Every acre foot of water left in the ground is one that doesn’t need to be found from a supply
 - Example: how do we make development water neutral?
 - When we’re talking about resilience, customer demand should be at the forefront
 - Understanding how customers are changing their behavior and choices related to water consumption is foundational
 - Then consider changes in customer behaviors/demand as you invest in infrastructure to avoid stranded assets in the long-term
 - We don’t want to waste funds investing in infrastructure that customers won’t use, and it will shift costs to those those who may not be able to afford it

Director AB1234 Report

Director Name: Beth Braunstein

Meeting Attended: "Drought: Are We Ready?" Webinar, hosted by the Southern California Water Coalition.

Date of Meeting: April 29th, 2021

Board Meeting to be Presented At: May 4th, 2021

Points of Interest:

- Panelist came from varied backgrounds, and provided many different points of view;
Heather Dyer, General Manager, San Bernardino Valley Municipal Water District
Newsha Ajami, Director of Urban Water Policy, Stanford University Water in the West program
Paul Cook, General Manager, Irvine Ranch Water District
Erik Ekdahl, Deputy Director, State Water Resources Control Board
Karla Nemeth, Director, California Dept. of Water Resources

- We are currently experiencing dryer levels than the 2014/15 drought and the State Water Project is going to be greatly effected. They are predicting the lowest levels of water in the Orville reservoir since the mid 1970s.
- Some of the communities effected by the last drought haven't managed to recover yet.
- Californians don't experience the drought in our state the same way. It differs based on our region and the watersheds we draw water from.
- Since we are mostly experiencing dryer than expected years, and are 40% of the time at drought levels - it may be time to acknowledge that a "normal year" is actually a dry year and not the other way around.
- In the past few years extreme temperatures have made our drought years even more extreme.
- Creating an ability to store water when we get extreme rainfall is crucial.
- Collaboration and partnerships that bring everyone to the table are vital.
- There is a need to change the way we think about our water use. We must become water efficient as a way of life, and not just conserve when we are in trouble. Being proactive is key.
- Our groundwater sustainability is what can make all the difference in our community.
- There is no one solution fits all, different areas have different needs and resilience options.
- There is still a great need for more data so that plans moving forward are actually addressing what we need and where we need it.

April Jacobs

Subject: FW: AB 1234 REPORT

-----Original Message-----

From: Jerry Gladbach <jgladbach@scvwa.org>
Sent: Thursday, April 29, 2021 12:49 PM
To: April Jacobs <ajacobs@scvwa.org>
Subject: AB 1234 REPORT

DIRECTOR's AB 1234 REPORT

Director's Name: Jerry Gladbach
Meeting Attended: The Southern California Water Coalition's webinar: Drought:
Are We Ready?
Date of Meeting: April 29, 2021
Date of Meeting to be Presented at: May 4, 2021 Points of Interest:
Charlie Wilson, Chairman of SCWC, was the Moderator Panelists were:
Karla Nemeth, Director, of Ca. DWR
Erik Ekdahl, Deputy Director, SWRCB
Newsha Ajami, Director, Urban Water Policy, Stanford University, Water in the West Program
Heather Dyer, GM, San Bernardino Valley MWD Paul Cook, GM, Irvine Ranch WD The main points that they made were:
The last drought was a wake-up call
We are in a major drought
We must all work together
We must do a better job of operating the reservoirs to keep as much water in storage as possible, recognizing the need for storage to store flood water, by doing a better job of studying the atmospheric rivers, so we don't release more water than necessary to capture the storm water.
We need to do more:
on other ways of capturing storm water, Recycling Desalting Water use efficiency Conservation
'20-'21 is dryer than '14-'15
So Cal water agencies have done a great job to plan for droughts Need to educate customers on water
Source
Aqueducts
Storage
Treatment
Delivery
Charlie asked 3 questions of attendees throughout the session
Are we better off now than in the last drought?
57% said better, 34 % same, and 9% worse
Where is the best opportunity to save water?
44% said more education, 20% urban, 6% ag and 30% climate change is real
Biggest risks of drought?
23% said small systems will be hardest hit, 31% not working together, 25% environment, and 22% increased investment It was a great webinar and over 200 attended.



What Matters
Webinar Series

Drought: Are We Ready?

April 29, 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. PDT

A looming mega-drought is building in the western U.S., just five years after California's hottest and longest dry stretch on record ended in 2016. Discover how Southern California has increased its drought resiliency since and what may be different this time around.

Keynote Speakers



Newsha Ajami
Director of Urban Water Policy,
Stanford University Water in the West program



Erik Ekdahl
Deputy Director,
State Water Resources Control Board



Heather Dyer,
General Manager,
San Bernardino Valley Municipal Water District



Paul Cook
General Manager,
Irvine Ranch Water District



Karla Nemeth
Director,
California Dept. of Water Resources

Founding Sponsors



Director name: Gary Martin

Meetings attended: Southern California Water Coalition Program “Drought: Are We Ready?” part of the SCWC “What Matters Webinar Series.”

Dates of meetings: April 29, 2021

Location: Virtual

SCV Water Board meeting to be presented at: May 4, 2021

On April 29, 2021, I attended the SCWC program entitled Drought: Are We Ready? The meeting was conducted virtually on the Zoom platform. The moderator was SCWC Executive Director Charley Wilson, and the panelists were as follows:

Newsha Ajami, Director of Urban Water Policy, Stanford University Water in the West Program.

Paul Cook, General Manager, Irvine Ranch Water District.

Heather Dyer, General Manager, San Bernardino Valley Municipal Water District.

Erik Ekdahl, Deputy Director, State Water Resources Control Board.

Karla Nemeth, Director, California Department of Water Resources.

The following are points of interest from each of the panelist’s presentations:

Karla Nemeth:

- California is better prepared for this drought than the 2014/2015 drought, but communities that struggled then are still in difficult shape.
- Drought versus drought emergency (DE) was explained. DE is a condition of acute shortage.
- The SWP condition in 2020/2021 is worse than in 2014/2015. Oroville will be drained down to the lowest level by 10/1/21 since the 1970’s.
- DWR is operating the SWP “very tightly.”
- We need to need to focus on long-term infrastructure projects and programs, while also addressing environmental concerns.
- There is need to manage reservoirs and understand extreme hydrology.
- We need to continue to reduce demand, develop recycled water resources and conjunctive use projects.
- We must invest in the “all of the above” projects.
- Southern California is very diverse and very water stressed, hence it is in good position to lead in integrated water management and work to define what water resilience looks like.

Erik Ekdahl:

- Compared to the 2014/2015 drought, California is better prepared to respond to drinking water shortages and has a better understanding of ECO systems.

Newsha Ajami:

- Droughts in California are not uncommon. In the last 100 years, 40% of the years fell below the drought threshold.
- In the last 100 years, 50% of the years fell below “normal.”
- The “new normal just might be dry conditions.
- Legislative actions resulting from the last drought, such as SGMA. Have been very positive.
- Southern California is better prepared as a result of the last drought.

- Regional issues are very important in water planning / resilience.

Heather Dyer:

- State Water Contractors need to be planning for future droughts, such as investing in below ground storage.
- More storage is needed, such as regional water banking.
- Smart above ground storage, such as the SITES Reservoir is an important investment.
- We need collaborative pre-planning for adaptation and resiliency.
- We must do long-term planning and be adaptive as conditions change and become better known.

Paul Cook:

- At the retail level, customers come first.
- The concept of drought versus drought emergency is very meaningful.
- The difference between conservation and efficiency was discussed. We need 7-24/365 efficiency.
- What was done and accomplished in water use efficiency in the 2014/2015 drought will not be undone.
- We must be ready for conservation.

I found the program to be very informative and thought provoking. I appreciate being able to attend.

AB1234 Report
Lynne Plambeck
Drought: Are We Ready?
Southern California Water Committee
April 29th, 2021 10-11:30AM

A looming mega-drought is building in the western U.S., just five years after California's hottest and longest dry stretch on record ended in 2016. This seminar discussed the ways Southern California has increased its drought resiliency 2016 and what may be different this time around.

Panelists:

*Newsha Ajami, Director of Urban Water Policy, Stanford University Water in the West program
Is the current dry spell a continuation of the last drought? In the last 40 years, we have been normal 40% of the time – this seems to be the new normal. Need to prepare for less water. Need pro-active behavior that will help us to be more proactive. Last drought was not only dry, but really hot which took us to a new level. Last drought encouraged making conservation as a way of life. Need regional perspectives because opportunities are very different throughout the state. Look at demand – how can water efficiency be encouraged in new development. Also, we have to be careful not to build infrastructure that we will not use in the future and end up with stranded assets that someone must pay for.

*Paul Cook, General Manager, Irvine Ranch Water District

At the retailer level, we need to make sure water comes out of the tap. Irvine Ranch has adopted a strategy of being “efficient” all the time. – Good word to use. Current drought makes it easier to encourage people to be “efficient”. Last drought, they encouraged people to get rid of their lawns, and they are not coming back.

*Heather Dyer, General Manager, San Bernardino Valley Municipal Water District

Discussed local collaboration including buying excess water and putting it in the ground. Priority – we need storage.

*Erik Ekdahl, Deputy Director, State Water Resources Control Board

Fish impacts in drought – how do we better prepare, water temp control? Habitat restoration? We need better real time accounting on water data to address drought.

*Karla Nemeth, Director, California Dept. of Water Resources

We are in better shape than the last drought, but some locations have not recovered and are still having problems. Gov announced a drought emergency in Sonoma and Mendocino and asked everyone to expedite their drought planning. Drought v. EMERGENCY Drought We kept about 60% of the demand efficiency that we gained from the last drought.