

MINUTES (FINAL)

Chairperson: Thomas Burhenn
Vice Chairperson: Christine Mulholland
Secretary: Brendan Clark

The following action minutes are listed as they were acted upon by the Water Resources Advisory Committee (WRAC) as listed on the Regular Meeting agenda for **October 1, 2025** together with staff reports and related documents attached thereto and incorporated therein by reference.

The video recording of the meeting and materials submitted to the WRAC are available online: [https://www.slocounty.ca.gov/Departments/Public-Works/Committees-Programs/Water-Resources-Advisory-Committee-\(WRAC\).aspx](https://www.slocounty.ca.gov/Departments/Public-Works/Committees-Programs/Water-Resources-Advisory-Committee-(WRAC).aspx)

Call to order at 1:30 PM

1) **Determination of a Quorum and Introductions**

The number of voting Members present is 19. Quorum met.

2) **Approval of September 3, 2025, WRAC Meeting Minutes**

Item start time ~ 00:04:42

T. Burhenn introduces the item and asks for questions or comments from the Committee.
No comments.

MOTION: Approve the September 3, 2025 WRAC Meeting Minutes				
MOTION BY: E. Greening				
SECOND BY: C. Mulholland				
MOTION CARRIES	AYES: 17	NOES: 0	ABSTAIN: 2	ABSENT: 1

3) **Receive Presentation from County Staff on the DESAL Project and Provide Feedback**

Item start time ~ 00:04:52

T. Burhenn introduces the item and the Desal Plan Project team presents to WRAC.

Unidentified attendee asks for additional information about the site selection criteria and why the existing Diablo Canyon intake/outfall scored so low. L. Holmes responds.

E. Greening comments on the future of Diablo Canyon and the pending Decommissioning EIR. L. Holmes responds.

Z. Landrum asks for additional information regarding the scoring, zoning, and site selection criteria for the Morro Bay area. L. Holmes responds.

M. van Ryn asks if there are risk assessments of the selection sites available for review. L. Holmes responds.

Unidentified attendee asks if any alternative technology methods are being considered? L. Holmes responds.

E. Greening asks about the feasibility of exchanging inland North County purveyors' water for the full Salinas River flow instead of pumping water from coastal sites. Would Salinas drainage benefit from not having its water taken? L. Holmes responds.

D. Chipping asks if Whale Rock is included in Alternative 6, as it is not listed under Morro Bay and has a pipeline. L. Holmes responds.

M. van Ryn asks how the estimated water needs for Nipomo was determined in the Alternatives. Did the requested amount take into consideration population estimates? L. Holmes responds.

P. Brown comments that surveys were conducted to provide the best estimates for future water requests.

C. Varni asks whether the Nipomo Alternative assumes County acquisition of the Phillips 66 property and whether future decisions regarding South County Sanitation operations and their outfall are being considered. L. Holmes responds.

C. Mulholland asks whether there are any estimates regarding the acreage required for a large-scale project. To make this project truly regional, are water exchanges going to be utilized? L. Holmes responds.

D. Chipping asks what requirements are being looked at for energy cost and power consumption. L. Holmes responds.

C. Mulholland asks about funding strategies and potential financial responsibility for non-benefiting communities. L. Holmes and C. Howard responded.

C. Mulholland asks at what stage the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) comes into consideration. L. Holmes responds.

L. Azeem asks if conveyance is expected to be the most expensive element of the project. L. Holmes responds.

T. Burhenn asks whether two smaller alternatives could be selected instead of a single large alternative. L. Holmes responds.

C. Varni comments that the Coastal Commission has indicated any new South County treatment plant must be state-of-the-art and provide tertiary treatment for all municipal wastewater, potentially creating a new water source for the area.

C. Mulholland asks if growth-inducing land and environmental impacts are accounted for in the project analysis.

D. Chipping comments that existing conservation easements on Hearst Ranch could limit its feasibility as an alternative location.

E. Greening asks whether there have been any consultations to date with local tribes and whether each autonomous tribe has been identified as an interested party. A. Ford and C. Berg respond.

J. Edwards asks about the estimated land area needed for a 5-MGD facility and whether an approximate range is available. A. Ford responds.

E. Greening asks if there is anything in the process for contacting agencies immediately that can elicit information on growth inducing impacts and area security/resiliency needs. L. Holmes, A. Ford, and C. Howard respond.

E. Greening asks how present needs versus future growth are being considered and whether relevant agencies are being contacted now, noting this should be reflected in scoring. L. Holmes and C. Howard respond.

P. Brown comments on the purpose and scope of the feasibility study.

D. Chipping asks if integrating recycled water with desalination has been considered, noting it may create a stronger project. L. Holmes responds.

C. Berg provides a summary of the September community engagement activities and the input received. WRAC members discussed the online survey, future community engagement opportunities, options for holding additional stakeholder meetings, and other public outreach alternatives.

C. Varni asks if the project provides a nexus for agricultural users. L. Holmes responds.

4) Ongoing Updates

Item start time ~ 01:19:56

a) Rain & Reservoir Report

E. Greening comments on rain observations with the recent storm, noting that we likely didn't get enough to activate the first flush.

b) California Drought Monitor Summary

No comments.

c) Groundwater Basin Management Efforts

No comments.

d) Flood Control Zones

No comments.

e) Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM)

B. Clark notes that 4 projects were submitted with the recent call for projects solicitation. An update will be provided to the WRAC later this year.

f) Master Water Report (MWR) Update

No comments.

g) State Water Project (SWP)

E. Greening comments on an upcoming Board item regarding SWP transfers agendaized for the October 7th BOS meeting.

h) Desalination Executable Solution and Logistics Plan (DESAL Plan)

No comments.

i) Various County Water Programs, Policies, and Ordinances

No comments.

j) Open Reporting on Water Conservation Opportunities & Information

No comments.

5) Future Agenda Items

No comments.

6) Public Comment for Items not on the Agenda

No comments.