

MINUTES (Approved)

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 Special Meeting agenda for **August 5, 2026** 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

T. Burhenn called the meeting to order. 17 Members were present, constituting a quorum.

2) Receive Presentation on the Draft Desalination Executable Solution and Logistics (DESAL) Plan

Item start time ~ 00:03:33

Click here to view a recording of the full presentation and discussion:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cntZSMqgehk>

T. Burhenn introduced the item, and County staff and the DESAL Plan Project Team presented the Draft DESAL Plan Feasibility Study. Committee members and members of the public provided questions and comments, which are summarized below by presentation section.

Project Objectives/Timeline

- None

Alternatives Evaluation Process and Rough Screened Alternatives

- Are you assuming *Alternative A – Cambria* will solve the building ban in Cambria? Are you designing a full buildout?

Alternative Costs

- Regarding projected annualized unit costs, what is the length of the lifecycle used for the alternatives?
- For each of the alternatives, have you determined the estimated cost per rate payer? How likely is this to affect feasibility?
- Do unit costs include the amortization of capital costs? If so, over how many years?
- What are the primary differences between *Alternative B - Cayucos/Estero Marine Terminal* and *Alternative C - Morro Bay Area*?
- Are land acquisition costs included in the "Details and Construction Cost Breakdown"?
- For the Morro Bay Alternative, can you run such a large system on the existing electrical infrastructure? What are the power requirements?
- Regarding *Alternative D - South SLO*, the Coastal Commission mandated that the South County treatment facility be relocated to address sea-level rise and flooding risks. Given this requirement, the proposed alternative site may not be appropriate. How does this issue factor into the study? How would the proposed facility connect to the existing outfall? Would co-locating the proposed facility with the South County treatment facility be considered?
- Comments on the Plan are being submitted by local agencies; are those comments currently being considered and shared with the public?
- The City of San Luis Obispo has a policy related to wheeling water. Has their City Council formally discussed or voted on participating as a partner in any of the proposed alternatives, or does the City plan to do so?
- Are the current DESAL Plan partners helping to pay for the feasibility study?
- What methodology and assumptions were used to develop the cost estimates presented? Did the analysis consider differences in cost between typical municipal pipelines and long-distance pipelines that convey chlorinated water, including the potentially higher costs associated with those systems?
- Is Morro Bay the only agency partner that is not currently requesting desalinated water as part of its water supply portfolio?
- How much land is going to be required for each of these alternatives?
- When is the Santa Maria Refinery expected to be fully decommissioned?
- Are the Annualized Unit Costs per AFY shown in current day or future dollars?
- Costs for desalinated water appear to be significantly higher than what agencies are currently paying per AF.

Benefits of Desalination

- There is a typo on page 5-10, Section 5.3.2: change "510 percent" to "5 to 10 percent".
- It would be beneficial to highlight the economic benefits of avoiding drought impacts in the Executive Summary to help demonstrate and justify the costs of the project.

- Could the aggregated benefits be further broken down to show how they are distributed among potential beneficiaries?
- Did the analysis consider lost County sales tax revenue during drought years as part of the economic impact estimate?
- At what point, and by whom, would a determination be made that desalination is not feasible?

Community Engagement and Outreach

- Were areas with critical water supply needs, such as Los Osos or Cambria, given greater consideration when developing the alternatives?
- Was outreach conducted with Chumash tribes or relevant federal agencies regarding potential desalination operations within the Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary?
- Will the Environmental section of the report be revised to address environmental justice concerns based on public input?

Potential Future Phases of Work

- None

Continued Q&A

- What are the potential benefits to a host community, particularly if the community does not need the water supply?
- What benefits could rural or agricultural entities receive, given the focus on urban water supplies?
- Could the water supply be used by private or semi-private entities to serve new development?
- How would desalinated water offset existing or new water uses, as mentioned in Chapter 3.4, and how does the assumed 25% State Water offset factor into the analysis?

3) Consider Providing Letter to District Board of Supervisors Regarding DESAL Plan

Item start time ~ 01:33:50

T. Burhenn introduced the item and opened the floor for discussion.

Committee members discussed options and preferences regarding the letter's format, content, approach, and the importance of submitting it to the District Board of Supervisors.

MOTION: Submit the letter, excluding the optional content, to the District Board of Supervisors recommending that they receive and file the DESAL Plan Feasibility Study.

MOTION BY: C. Mulholland

SECOND BY: M. Watkins

MOTION CARRIES

AYES: 12

NOES: 0

ABSTAIN: 0

ABSENT: 4

4) Public Comment for Items not on the Agenda

No Comment.