



**San Francisco Public Utilities Commission
 Citizens' Advisory Committee
 Water Subcommittee**

MEETING MINUTES

**Tuesday, March 22, 2022
 5:30 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.**

PARTICIPATE VIA ZOOM VIRTUAL CONFERENCE SOFTWARE

Meeting URL

<https://sfwater.zoom.us/j/86096652424?pwd=OUN6ak5nK3IHbTNWeU9wSzFNeXdPdZ09>

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Meeting ID / Passcode

860 9665 2424 / 419705

Mission: The Water Subcommittee reviews water supply system reliability, water conservation, recycling, regional cooperation efforts and other relevant plans and policies. ([Admin Code 5.140-142](#))

This meeting is being held by Teleconference Pursuant to the Governor's Executive Order N-29-20 and the Sixteenth Supplement to Mayoral Proclamation Declaring the Existence of a Local Emergency Dated February 25,2020

During the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) emergency, the San Francisco Public Utilities Citizens Advisory Committee's (SFPUC CAC) regular meeting room, 525 Golden Gate Ave., 3rd Floor Tuolumne Conference Room, is closed. CAC Members and SFPUC staff will convene CAC meetings remotely by teleconference. Members of the public are encouraged to submit their public comment on agenda items in advance of the teleconference meeting by emailing comments to cac@sfwater.org. Comments submitted no later than 12 PM the day of the meeting will be read into the record by SFPUC CAC Staffing Team members during the teleconference meeting and will be treated as a substitute to providing public comment during the meeting. Persons who submit written public comment in advance on an agenda item or items will not be permitted to also provide public comment on the same agenda item(s) during the meeting.

Members:

Jennifer Clary (Chair) (D11)	Suki Kott (D2)	Amy Nagengast (D8)
Nicole Sandkulla (M-Reg'l Water Customers)	Eliahu Perszyk (M-Large Water User)	Douglas Jacuzzi (D4)

D = District Supervisor appointed, M = Mayor Appointed, B = Board President appointed

Staff Liaisons: Mayara Ruski Augusto Sa and Jobanjot Aulakh
 Staff Email for Public Comment: cac@sfwater.org

OUR MISSION: To provide our customers with high-quality, efficient and reliable water, power and sewer services in a manner that values environmental and community interests and sustains the resources entrusted to our care.

London N. Breed
 Mayor

Anson Moran
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Newsha Ajami
 Vice President

Sophie Maxwell
 Commissioner

Tim Paulson
 Commissioner

Ed Harrington
 Commissioner

Dennis J. Herrera
 General Manager



ORDER OF BUSINESS

1. Call to Order and Roll Call at 5:31 pm

Members present at roll call: (4) Clary, Sandkulla, Perszyk, and Jacuzzi

Members Absent: (2) Kott and Nagengast

Staff presenters: Tim Ramirez

Members of the Public: Peter Drekmeier and Dave Warner

*Member Kott joined at 5:40 pm. Quorum maintained.

**Member Nagengast joined at 5:42 pm and left at 6:52 pm. Quorum maintained.

2. Approval of the [January 25, 2022 Minutes](#)

Motion was made (Sandkulla) and seconded (Perszyk) to approve the January 25, 2022 Minutes.

AYES: (4) Clary, Sandkulla, Perszyk, and Jacuzzi

NOES: (0)

ABSENT: (2) Kott and Nagengast

Public Comment: None

3. Report from the Chair

- Chair welcomes committee members, staff, and the public
- Welcome and introduction of new member District 4 representative Douglas Jacuzzi

Public Comment:

- Dave Warner commented that he does not want Chair Clary to quit the CAC.

4. Public Comment: Members of the public may address the Committee on matters that are within the committee's jurisdiction and are not on today's agenda (*2 minutes per speaker*)

- **Dave Warner** mentioned that he plans on sending some slides to the Water CAC via email. Peter Drekmeier provided Warner with an outstanding slide for the fish passage for Tuolumne, Stanislaus, and Merced rivers. It is a very sad slide when looking at those three rivers and looking at Tuolumne. They are so lucky to still have a few salmon. The chart shows about 133 salmon in the Tuolumne, which is just a miserable number. Warner mentioned that the Stanislaus has a whole bunch more salmon, and Merced is somewhere between the two and asked what the reason for such a difference is. When looking at average flows remaining on the river, the Tuolumne only has 21% on average of its original flows or its full unimpaired flows. Merced has

26% and the Tuolumne has 40%. The Stanislaus salmon are more than ten times greater than the Tuolumne's. The SFPUC is opposing the Bay Delta Plan, and they are not anxious to put more water in. Water makes such a big difference. Warner believes that the SFPUC has plenty of water and could support the Bay Delta Plan.

Public Comment: None

5. Issue: Natural Resources and Lands Management Update, Tim Ramirez, Natural Resources and Lands Management Division Manager, Water Enterprise

Action: Understand the current projects that the Natural Resources and Lands Management Division is working on currently

Introduction

- **Staff Ramirez** provided some background on the Water Enterprise Environmental Stewardship Policy Implementation Report, which the Water Enterprise does every two years. This first report was done in 2020 and the next report is due in the spring and will go to the Commission in June.

Presentation

- Natural Resources and Lands Management
- Overview
- Meet Environmental Legal Requirements – Impact Avoidance & Permits
- Meet Environmental Legal Requirements – WSIP Mitigation
- Meet Environmental Legal Requirements – BHR
- Meet Environmental Legal Requirements – Fisheries Monitoring
- Meet Environmental Legal Requirements – Operations and Maintenance Activities
- OSD Instream Flow Management Program – Poopenaut Valley
- Manage Natural Resources – Tuolumne River Watershed
- Manage Natural Resources – Property Acquisition
- WEIP Acquisitions Alameda Watershed
- WEIP Acquisition – “Section 21”
- Manage Natural Resources – Minimize Wildfire Risk
- Peninsula Watershed Historical Ecology Study August 2021
- Peninsula Watershed Prescribed Burns New CALFIRE Agreements
- SCU Lightning Complex SFPUC Alameda Watershed
- SCU Lightning Complex
- SCU Lightning Complex Arroyo Hondo post-fire
- SCU Lightning Complex Wildfire Recovery
- Peninsula Watershed Lightning Fires
- Manage Natural Resources – Non-native Invasive Species Management
- Education Opportunities – Alameda Creek Watershed Center in Sunol
- Education Opportunities – Southern Skyline Boulevard Ridge Trail Extension
- Southern Skyline Boulevard Ridge Trail Extension
- Manage and operate Water Enterprise assets consistent with the Environmental Stewardship Policy
- Questions?

Discussion

- **Member Perszyk** asked if tribal leaders are interested in increased representation when it comes to land management and working with the SFPUC.

Staff Ramirez responded that they have worked the most with the Muwekma Ohlone, which is one of the many different groups in the Bay Area with tribal interests. Most of the Water Enterprise's work is centered around the Watershed Center. It began before construction started and became more rich and deeper as part of the work that was done to excavate the site. They knew it was potentially going to be a site rich in resources and remains, which is what happened. Consequently, staff has regular communication with the tribal leaders of the Muwekma Ohlone, which covers the excavation work, the interpretative work, and the tribe's interest in becoming landowners and their interest in managing the watershed. The Muwekma Ohlone are keenly interested to do more and to be more involved, which the SFPUC would love to see happen. The SFPUC is also part of a Bay Area non-profit organization that used to be called the Bay Area Open Space Council and is now called Together Bay Area. This non-profit organization is a coalition of public agencies, non-profits, and tribes. The Muwekma are part of that organization along with other tribes. The SFPUC is using that forum to reach new people that they did not have access to before. There are also folks on the Peninsula that the SFPUC needs to do more work with, such as the Ramaytush. The plan is to do this in a thoughtful and conscientious way. The SFPUC is also trying to make sure that they are super inclusive of all the interests that are out there. If there are people that CAC members are working with, staff would be happy to connect with them to make sure that they start that discussion.

- **Member Perszyk** commented that there is a great deal going on and it is early in the process. Perszyk asked if there is anybody that Staff Ramirez is working with that would be interested in talking to the CAC along with him about the process and their interests.

Staff Ramirez responded that the Watershed and Environment Improvement Coordinator has been the point of contact with the Muwekma from the beginning. The SFPUC would be happy to discuss in more detail the things that they are doing that can be shared with the public. There are matters that are very sensitive and important for the tribe that are confidential.

Member Perszyk commented that he specifically meant land management and representation of a higher-level decision maker, and he understands that there are certain things they cannot discuss.

Staff Ramirez responded that they would be happy to discuss these topics. There are many different groups that would like to participate, and the SFPUC would like them all to be able to. The SFPUC is happy to discuss more about those things if the CAC would like to and a follow up presentation can be arranged. The Commission now reads a land acknowledgement that they worked on with the Muwekma at their meetings.

- **Member Perszyk** asked how much time staff would need to come back to the CAC to discuss that.

Staff Ramirez responded that he would need to think about that before giving an answer. Staff Ramirez could ask the Muwekma if they have an interest in sharing some of their work themselves as staff does not need to be involved.

- **Member Perszyk** thanked Staff Ramirez for the work that he has done.

Staff Ramirez responded that Carla, the Watershed and Environment Improvement Coordinator, is the one who has done the heavy lifting. It is important work that is hard, but they are starting to lean into it in a way that they have not before, which is exciting.

- **Member Sandkulla** commented that it was great to see an update about where things are going, especially with the Watershed Center and the interpretative trail run skylights. Both of those are the next step to really engaging the public outside of San Francisco about this water system. Sandkulla strongly suggested that the CAC or maybe the Water Subcommittee members have an opportunity to go over to the Sunol Watershed Center and see the native nursery. It is unique and impressive and speaks to redefining things a little bit differently to achieve the objective.

Staff Ramirez responded that Chair Clary and Sandkulla were there before he was and really planted the seeds that are growing now. This is the result of years and decades of work by many others and not him. It is great to see some of that happening. These are places, facilities, and service that are going to be available in a unique way.

Public Comment:

- **Peter Drekmeier** commented that he is very thankful that the SFPUC owns so much land in the Bay Area and manages it well. There are exciting things happening in the Alameda Creek Watershed. He knows that the SFPUC has not been overseeing the fish ladder there, but he is sure that they played a role in it, which is very exciting.

Staff Ramirez responded that they do have their own fish ladder.

Peter Drekmeier asked where that was.

Staff Ramirez responded that it was the Diversion Dam. It is the one and only fish ladder that the SFPUC has. It also has its own story, which will be in the report. That operation is extremely complicated, and the SFPUC does not do it by themselves. They do it with their water treatment, so Staff Ramirez did not want Drekmeier to think that the SFPUC does not have any interest in fish ladders because they do.

- **Peter Drekmeier** asked if the frog people were opposed to that.

Staff Ramirez responded that the frog people are struggling with it. The SFPUC is the owner and operator, so they are struggling to operate it in a way that is good for fish and frogs. The frogs were listed during construction by the State, and it was proposed by the federal agency list it as well.

- **Peter Drekmeier** commented that he knows Staff Ramirez has a great deal of balancing to do, and he has respected and admired Staff Ramirez's role on the Peninsula Watershed regarding public access

and balancing that with ecosystem protection. Drekmeier understands that was a tough one because he had personal friends on both sides, and he is sure Staff Ramirez did too. He also wanted to acknowledge that it was probably about ten years ago that \$2 million went towards the acquisition of Dos Rios Ranch, which is at the confluence of the Tuolumne and San Joaquin. The Tuolumne River Trust was able to purchase 1600 acres, and River Partners has been restoring it. It is amazing because every time Drekmeier goes there, there are changes and they have planted so much. The Riparian Brush Rabbits, which are a very endangered species, have been re-colonizing that area. That is a neat success story, and the SFPUC deserves credit for helping make that happen. The Upper Tuolumne stakeholder group known as the Upper Tuolumne River Ecosystem Restoration Program has been a great process with great science and collaboration between the park service, forest service, the SFPUC, and non-profits. Drekmeier is glad to hear that the SFPUC received the funding they needed to update the studies for the Instream Flow Management Plan. He knew that was coming up, but he missed when that was specifically addressed. Drekmeier figured no news was good news because he probably would have heard about it if the money had not come through. He also wanted to acknowledge that Environmental Stewardship Policy was great. Drekmeier knows that Staff Ramirez played a big role in that, and he assumes that Chair Clary did as well. He also wanted to point out that the SFPUC manages its dams on the Upper Tuolumne to mimic instream flows as much as possible. Unfortunately, in the Lower Tuolumne, which is not the SFPUC's jurisdiction but the irrigation district's, the position has been that instream flows are not that important, and they want to invest in non-flow measures. Drekmeier knows that the SFPUC plays second fiddle on the Lower Tuolumne, but it has been disappointing that there has not been more support for the Bay Delta Plan and other things.

- **Staff Ramirez** addressed Chair Clary and commented that regarding Dos Rios, the report will contain a table that chronicles all the funding from the get-go. Chair Clary will be able to check the SFPUC's math and make sure that they are meeting the objectives of that program, so that will be one of the things that is included in the report.

6. **Issue:** [Long-term Vulnerability Assessment for the Regional Water System](#), Alexis Dufour, Water Resources Engineer in Hydrology and Water System, Water Enterprise

Action: Learn about the findings of the Long-term Vulnerability Assessment

Resource: [Long Term Vulnerability Assessment](#)

Presentation

- Postponed to a later date.

Discussion

- **Chair Clary** commented that this will be an abbreviated discussion because SFPUC staff were not able to attend the meeting Chair Clary added that the purpose of the Long-term Vulnerability Assessment is to understand the stressors to the system due to climate and asked Member Sandkulla to add how she would define it.

Member Sandkulla responded that it developed a great deal of tools to examine the stressors and the risks to the long-term operation of the system, including climate change. It is not limited to climate change though, as it is broader than that. It gave the SFPUC a bunch of tools to use for long-term planning purposes and investments.

- **Chair Clary** commented that the Water CAC members will want to know more about the tools, and that the members will want to understand what the tools were and how they can be adapted and used moving forward.
- **Chair Clary** commented that one of her issues, for instance, was the time period that was chosen of 1986 through 2005 because when looking at 1986 to 2005, Chair Clary thought they had six below average rain years. She then corrected herself and commented that it was ten years. When taking the 20 years from 2001 to 2020, then it would be 15 years. One of Chair Clary's big concerns, which she does not know how to address in the model and will have SFPUC staff explain to her, is that the historic model of handling droughts is to use the water that is necessary knowing that the rains will come back, and recovery will be possible. Those recovery periods are being lost, which is creating more stressors on climate. That is a big piece that they are seeing more and more around the State as there are multiple drought years and no time for recovery. It was not clear to Chair Clary if or how that could be addressed in this analysis.

Member Kott asked if Chair Clary was saying whether the model was accurate given what they currently know.

Chair Clary responded that she thought the model was using current operations or the current operational model which allows for greater diversions in dry years. People are becoming more and more understanding that that may not be sustainable because they are in a 20-year-drought due to six or above average years in this century. Chair Clary thinks that they need to be modeling a future that focuses more on how the system is used in those dry years rather than it being a matter of dryer or wetter. How the system is being ran may need to change.

Member Sandkulla commented that she does not know that answer, but asking the question seems appropriate. Sandkulla commented that the dry 20 years were lucky for her.

- **Member Sandkulla** asked what it means if the recovery period does not exist anymore. This is an honest question to ask the SFPUC because it was an academic study that was designed as a launching off point. Those types of questions would be helpful to create a conversation as opposed to a yes/no answer.

Chair Clary responded that she understood the SFPUC's reasoning for modeling the Bay Delta Plan, but she would rather model to conditions than model to a plan because the conditions will reinforce the Bay Delta Plan scenario, which Chair Clary and Sandkulla may not agree on. She then commented that it was a more honest way to do it. Chair Clary summarized the points brought so far as the tools they want developed and how those tools can be used and adapted.

- **Member Nagengast** commented that she has looked at this PowerPoint slide but not the whole report, so maybe there is more in

the report that anchored it regarding where they are now, where they want to go, and what fills in the middle. Nagengast first wants to better understand where they are now, what they are using, and maybe those are the tools. These are also assumptions based on the six areas of vulnerability assessed, but maybe they are only doing one or two currently. The SFPUC does a little bit better with going through each of those categories. Member Nagengast would like to understand the process of how they went from where they are to where they are going, and what data sources were used. Nagengast would like to know how the SFPUC will be using this and in what ways.

Member Kott commented that when there is that gap between where they are and where they want to be, there must be stages along the way to check and see how it is going as well.

Member Nagengast responded that she doubted it was part of it because it was more research based, but she would be very interested to understand how other utilities are starting to deal with this and how it compares to the SFPUC's approach. Nagengast also did not understand how the definition of vulnerability was defined regarding infrastructure and finance. A distinction between vulnerabilities and risk assessments would be helpful to better comment and provide feedback on the report.

- **Member Perszyk** commented that he wanted to provide some quick feedback. At the last meeting, the SFPUC was asked to respond to the comments in the LTVA (Long-term Vulnerability Assessment) request letters. With risk mitigation, one of the most important things is developing an alternative water supply. The more that infrastructure is developed, then risk will be reduced on the whole system. There was a bullet at the bottom of the presentation that said the LTVA modeling tool will be applied to the alternative water supply. It seems like such a critical piece, though, so how could an alternative water supply reduce the risk to the overall system. With climate change, it should be based on current years because climate seems to be changing quickly, and it is getting very hot and dry. For example, when discussing water releases for the salmon, how is that going to change with the climate change predictions that the SFPUC has in the report?

Chair Clary responded that she did not see anything about climate or water temperature needs.

Member Perszyk commented that he did not see that as well.

Chair Clary responded that admittedly, she had not seen the whole report yet. She then asked Member Perszyk if he had seen anything.

Member Perszyk responded that he did not either, but he tried. Maybe it is buried in there, but it did not seem that important in the report.

- **Chair Clary** summarized that the Committee wanted to understand the tools better and what they do, they want to try to understand how the SFPUC would model for drought recovery when they are not recovering, they want a better understanding of how the tools will be used and applied to alternative water supplies to assess changes in risk, how are other utilities doing this, how is vulnerability defined as opposed to risk assessment, what are the SFPUC's responses to the NGO letter, and can the SFPUC be more specific about water influenced by the SFPUC such as instream flows, temperatures, and

fish passage. Chair Clary commented that they will write this up and provide it to Staff Dufour.

Public Comment:

- **Dave Warner** commented that he thought the CAC was asking great questions and that the LTVA was a remarkable and comprehensive document. A benefit of going back further than what the CAC suggested would allow them to see the rate of change. The rate of change is hugely important to determine how fast the system can respond to these climate changes. Warner would ask questions regarding what the conclusions were about precipitation in the next 50 years and what the severities and frequencies of droughts would be in the next 50 years as well. The answers to these questions might be surprising. Warner also asked what the implications around cost relative to demand were, which really affects alternative water supplies. There was a chart in the LTVA that made a stunning remark about water supplies going up by a factor of seven water costs if they invest in alternative water supplies and the demand is realized. Warner also attended a presentation where Valley Water discussed what they did about climate change. The conclusion they received from their group of scientists was very similar to the conclusion of the scientists in the LTVA, which was that in most climate models, precipitation did not decrease. One possible conclusion from this is that they do not need to worry about climate so much if it was true. The intensity of the periods varied, but maybe not so much that it affected their drops in a negative way.
- **Peter Drekmeier** commented that the Tuolumne River Trust has been making a case for many years that the Bay Delta Plan folks were not that onerous for the SFPUC. They could be met, and they would not run out of water. There was a different narrative from SFPUC staff and others, so they were grateful when Ed Harrington was appointed to the Commission and he announced a series of workshops to do a deep dive into the science, demand projections, alternative water supplies, and ultimately climate change. That was a 15-month process. The wonderful thing was that the NGOs were invited to have panels at those. They avoided he said/she said to have real-time dialogue and made so much progress. The understanding of the Commission moved in a positive direction, and the idea was that the Long-term Vulnerability Assessment would be the sixth and final workshop, which allowed them to have all the information to address the issues. The Tuolumne River Trust brought up the issue of needing a plan for the correct length of drought. Two droughts cannot be randomly put together to say there is some science behind it. The science said that what they had been planning for was extremely unlikely. The second issue was to use reasonable and realistic demand projections that they are learning more about all the time. The demand just will not grow the way they thought it was. It has been five months since that last workshop, and they have not seen any movement. Drekmeier was grateful to hear that the CAC has asked staff to respond to the NGO request. Drekmeier commented that he and Warner were part of a panel in October for the workshop on the LTVA, which had not been released yet, but they were able to see the presentation in advance. There were some obvious issues, one of which was that the baseline demand was 16% higher than actual demand today. There were five other demands that went up to 71% higher, but the current demand was not there. An obvious thing would be to run scenarios with the current demand, but also put in the instream flow requirements because the Commissioners are going to want to know the effects.

There was a return period for the droughts that they knew about that are unlikely to happen. They asked what the return period or the equivalent of that would be for the design drought and the design drought minus one year but even that simple request was ignored. Drekmeier appreciates that the CAC has asked for information because they have been stonewalled for a long time, and Commissioner Maxwell brought it up at the last meeting and asked some great questions that staff did not have a good response to, so they are trying to break through that impasse.

7. Staff Report

- The CAC will continue to meet remotely until additional guidance is received from the Mayor's office

Public Comment: None

8. Future Agenda Items and Resolutions

Standing Subjects

- Groundwater
- Water Quality

Specific Subjects

- Contaminants of Emerging Concern (CEC) - *tentatively* May
- Report on Water Supply
- Groundwater Report Update
- Water Enterprise Environmental Stewardship Policy Implementation Report Two-year Capital Plan
- Integrating Tribal Leaders into SFPUC Land Management Decisions
- State Board Water Rights
- Debate about Bay Delta – Member Sandkulla suggested everyone watch the February 5, 2021 Commission workshop about the Voluntary Agreement
- Affordability
- Implementation of the Bay Delta Plan Flow Requirement
- Hetch Hetchy Water and Power Division Update
- State Policy and Programs on Affordability or Low-Income Rate Assistance (LIRA)
- Bay Delta Plan and voluntary settlement agreement
- Legislative Update
- State of the Regional Water System Report – Bi-annual report
- Drought resilience: 3-year water supply update
- Water Equity and Homelessness
- State of Local Water Report
- Retail Conservation Report
- Emergency Firefighting Water System Update
- Natural Resources and Land Management Division Update
- Harry Tracy Water Treatment Plant tour

Adopted Resolutions for Follow Up

- Resolution in Support of a Resilient Water Supply [adopted August 17, 2021](#)
- Resolution in Support of the Southern Skyline Boulevard Ridge Trail Extension Project [adopted April 20, 2021](#)

- Resolution in Support of Interim Emergency Rate Assistance Program and Revised Community Assistance Program [adopted July 21, 2020](#)
- Resolution in Support of Improved Communications Related to the San Francisco Groundwater Supply Project [adopted August 21, 2018](#)
- Resolution in Supporting Stewardship and Public Access in the Redeveloped Lake Merced West Property [adopted on March 15, 2016](#)
- Resolution on Impacts of Drought on System Maintenance and Improvements [adopted January 19, 2016](#)

Public Comment: None

9. Announcements/Comments Please visit www.sfpuc.org/cac for final confirmation of the next scheduled meeting, agenda, and materials.

- **Member Kott** asked if the CAC could have a tour of Wool Ranch.

Staff Ramirez responded that they love tours, but Wool Ranch is a hard place to get to.

Chair Clary commented that the CAC should schedule a field trip as a substitute to the first in-person meeting.

10. Adjournment

Motion was made (Clary) and seconded (Kott) to adjourn the meeting.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:07 pm.