

SWEETWATER AUTHORITY GOVERNING BOARD
MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING

December 14, 2024, 9:00 a.m.
Sweetwater Authority
505 Garrett Avenue
Chula Vista, CA 91910

Directors Present: Elizabeth Cox, Manny Delgado, Hector Martinez,
Paulina Martinez-Perez, Ron Morrison, and Ditas Yamane

Directors Absent: Steve Castaneda

Staff Present: General Manager Carlos Quintero, Assistant General Manager
Roberto Yano, Legal Counsel Paula de Sousa, Board Secretary
Ligia Hoffman, Director of Water Quality Justin Brazil, Director of
Engineering and Operations Erick Del Bosque, Assistant Board
Secretary Michael Garcia, and Director of Finance Rich
Stevenson

Others Present: Cristina Marquez of IBEW 569, Brian Stephenson of Noria
Energy, Rita Clement of San Diego 350, Larry Emerson, Felix
Felix, Joann Fields, Malcolm Gettman, Karen Gless, Karen
Henry, James, Lance Jordan, Chris Pearson, Christopher
Pierce, Robert, Jessica Rocha, and Monika Walsh.

1. Call Meeting to Order and Roll Call

Director Martinez-Perez called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m.

2. Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag

3. Chair's Presentation

3.1 Presentation by Tom Brill of Greenberg Traurig, LLP, "Overview of the California Energy Use Landscape"

Robert commented on the lack of paperwork for the upcoming presentation, and added procedural comments related to the use of the internet and displaying of content during recent Closed Session meeting.

Tom Brill of Greenberg Traurig, LLP provided a verbal presentation.

Action and Discussion Items

4. New Business

4.1 Sweetwater Reservoir Floating Photovoltaic Project Environmental Review Next Steps

James commented on school district's investments in solar panels and subsequent actions by electric companies going after projects that impact their profits, the impacts of the floating solar on drinking water, and related risks.

Malcolm Gettman commented on stakeholder communication about the floating solar project, his participation in community issues, seeking more information about the project, and taking a holistic view.

Karen Henry ceded her time to Felix Felix.

Felix Felix commented on the project's impacts and encouraged a full Environmental Impact Report, the potential hazards of floating solar panels, and tabling the project.

Rita Clement of San Diego 350 spoke in support of the floating solar array project.

Lance Jordan spoke in opposition to the project and addressed potential cancer-related health impacts of the project.

Christopher Pierce commented on the Authority's focus on a risky project like floating solar when the Authority has existing infrastructure to maintain.

Joann Fields commented on the environmental, health, and generational impacts of the floating solar project and encouraged outreach by the Authority so that the whole community can participate in it.

Karen Gless of the Dictionary Hill Open Space Advocates commented on the biodiversity of the area and the impact of the project on the environment's health and encouraged a full EIR.

Monika Walsh encouraged that the project be halted due to not following proper protocol, that the Authority start over with multiple bids for the project, and that the environmental impacts be considered.

Jessica Rocha commented on the community outreach regarding the floating solar project and the accuracy of studies.

Robert commented on procedural issues and lack of documentation related to the item and encouraged the Board to oppose the project.

Larry Emerson commented on the technology of solar power, the cost of energy for water transport and treatment, and the impacts of gasoline.

Cristina Marquez of IBEW 569 - San Diego spoke in support of the project, meeting state goals for renewable energy and reducing consumption on the grid, and that the IBEW members are trained in the installation of projects like these.

Chris Pearson of the Sweetwater Valley Planning Group submitted written comments in support of conducting an Environmental Impact Report for the record.

Muriel Spooner of the San Diego Bird Alliance submitted written comments for the record.

Motion by: Director Yamane
Seconded by: Director Martinez

that the Governing Board authorize the General Manager to request proposals from the Authority's on-call environmental consulting firms to assist with the preparation of an Environmental Impact Report for the Sweetwater Reservoir Floating Photovoltaic Project.

Substitute Motion:
Motion by: Director Cox
Seconded by: Director Morrison

that Governing Board pause discussion and action on this item until after hearing the report of Agenda Item 4.2., and then revisit Agenda Item 4.1.

Ayes (6): Director Cox, Director Delgado, Director Martinez, Director Martinez-Perez, Director Morrison, and Director Yamane

Absent (1): Director Castaneda

Motion Carried (6 to 0)

4.2 Consideration to Reject Noria Energy's Proposals and Direct Staff to Issue a Request for Qualifications for a Renewable Energy Manager

Brian Stephenson of Noria Energy commented on the agreement between the Authority and Noria Energy and offered clarifying points related to the floating solar project and the work completed. (The Authority received a letter from Noria; copies of the letter was distributed to Directors, public present, and uploaded to the Authority's website.)

Robert commented on the floating solar project and the perspective and interests of Board members.

Christopher Pierce commented on the information being shared with the community regarding the floating solar project.

Karen Gleese commented on the materials of the floating arrays.

Malcolm Gettman commented on the need for an EIR to gather more information and gather community input.

Karen Gleese continued her comments related to the future of the project without completed an EIR.

Motion by: Director Morrison

Seconded by: Director Martinez

that the Governing Board direct staff to reject Noria Energy's proposals.

Ayes (6): Director Cox, Director Delgado, Director Martinez, Director Martinez-Perez, Director Morrison, and Director Yamane

Absent (1): Director Castaneda

Motion Carried (6 to 0)

4.1 Sweetwater Reservoir Floating Photovoltaic Project Environmental Review Next Steps (Continued)

Motion by: Director Yamane

Seconded by: Director Martinez

that the Governing Board authorize the General Manager to request proposals from the Authority's on-call environmental consulting firms to assist with the preparation of an Environmental Impact Report for the Sweetwater Reservoir Floating Photovoltaic Project.

Substitute Motion:

Motion by: Director Cox

Seconded by: Director Morrison

that the Governing Board defer discussion and action of this item.

Ayes (2): Director Cox, and Director Morrison

Noes (4): Director Delgado, Director Martinez, Director Martinez-Perez, and Director Yamane

Absent (1): Director Castaneda

Failed (2 to 4)

Original Motion by: Director Yamane

Seconded by: Director Martinez

that the Governing Board authorize the General Manager to request proposals from the Authority's on-call environmental consulting firms to assist with the preparation of an Environmental Impact Report for the Sweetwater Reservoir Floating Photovoltaic Project.

Ayes (4): Director Delgado, Director Martinez, Director Martinez-Perez, and Director Yamane

Noes (2): Director Cox, and Director Morrison

Absent (1): Director Castaneda

Motion Carried (4 to 2)

5. Adjournment

With no further business before the Board, Director Martinez-Perez adjourned the meeting at 11:30 a.m.

Paulina Martinez-Perez, Chair

Michael Garcia, Assistant Board Secretary