

**Southwestern Water Conservation District
Board of Directors Special Meeting via Zoom
May 6, 2021**

Present: David Guilliams Rusty Hinger Amy Huff
 Jenny Russell Don Schwindt Charlie Smith
 JR Ford (joined after 12:40 pm)

Absent: Monte Naslund

Staff: Laura Spann, Programs Coordinator

Consultants: Carrie Padgett, Harris Water Engineering
 Chris Treese, Independent Consultant
 Beth Van Vurst, Van Vurst Law, General Counsel

Guests: Ken Curtis, Dolores Water Conservancy District
 Steve Garchar, Dolores County Commissioner
 Ed Millard, Montezuma County Representative to Southwest Basin Roundtable
 Steve Wolff, Wyoming Interstate Streams Commission

1.0 Call to Order – Roll Call and Verification of Quorum

President Jenny Russell called the meeting to order at 12:00 p.m. Roll was taken and a quorum established.

2.0 Review and Approve Agenda

(time: 00:01:00)

There was board consensus to approve the agenda as noticed.

3.0 Questions & Comments from the Audience

(time: 00:01:15)

Laura Spann noted that SWCD's special board meeting on Thursday, May 13th will begin at 8:30 a.m. and Jacob Bornstein asked board members to submit their responses to the SWCD strategic planning electronic survey by Wednesday, May 12th.

4.0 New Business

4.1 State Legislative Update & Position on Bills

(time: 00:03:00)

Chris Treese summarized SB21-248 (Loan Program for Colorado Agriculture), which would create the Colorado Agricultural Loan Program in the Colorado Department of Agriculture to provide farm-to-market infrastructure loans to eligible applicants and low-interest loans to eligible farmers, ranchers, or ag-related businesses. The loan program would be funded by a one-time \$30 million General Fund transfer to the Colorado Department of Agriculture, at least \$15 million of which must be disbursed by December 31, 2022. There was board consensus to monitor SB21-248.

Chris also summarized SB21-258 (Wildfire Risk Mitigation), which would create two funds: the Wildfire Mitigation Capacity Development Fund, which would be established under the Colorado Department of Resources for a number of wildfire-related programs and the Hazard Mitigation Fund, which would assist local jurisdictions in obtaining matching funds for certain federal grants. The bill would also allow the State Forest Service to issue forest restoration and wildfire risk mitigation grants for projects on federal lands and expands the state's ability to fund capacity-building efforts for local governments, community groups, and collaborative forestry efforts. There was board consensus that SWCD monitor SB21-258.

Chris Treese reported that, at the request of the bill sponsors, he will be drafting a proposed amendment to HB21-1268 (Study Emerging Technologies for Water Management) to address SWCD board concerns. The amendment would delete all references to trading of water and add a 'Safety Clause' that says, "nothing in this section is intended to, nor shall be construed to, encourage, authorize or endorse speculation in Colorado water or water rights." Both bill sponsors are committed to adding this amendment when the bill goes to the House floor on Second Reading.

Chris also reported on several legislative and non-legislative topics, including the precedent-breaking appointment of Representative Marc Catlin (R-Montrose) by House Democratic leadership as the co-chair of the House Agriculture, Livestock and Water Committee, low severance tax revenue projections for the current year, the repayment of \$33 million from COVID-emergency relief back to the CWCB construction fund, and the recent settlement between Northern Colorado Water Conservancy District and several environmental groups regarding Northern's proposed Windy Gap Firming Project and the new Chimney Hollow Reservoir.

5.0 Old Business

5.1 Discussion of guiding principles for SWCD's exploration and consideration of demand management

(time: 00:16:45)

Chris Treese read the most recent draft guiding principles for SWCD's exploration and consideration of demand management, which were revised based on input from the board and public. The board discussed aspects of the draft document, including the SWCD's evaluation of potential opportunities from any demand management program and consideration of additional alternatives beyond demand management to address Colorado River basin water supply security. There was public comment regarding whether the document should further address Article IIIA of the Colorado River Compact as well as define proportionality and equity. The board also provided input on a public outreach strategy and opportunities between now and the SWCD regular June board meeting.

6.0 Adjournment

President Russell adjourned the meeting at 1:20 p.m.



Jenny Russell, President