



Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board

MINUTES

October 2, 2024

The Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board (Water Board) conducted this meeting at the locations shown below:

Mammoth Lakes; Community Center Park
1000 Forest Trail, Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546

And

Antelope Valley-East Kern Water Agency
6500 W Ave N
Palmdale, CA 93551

And

Via Video and Teleconference (Gov. Code § 11133)

Water Board Members

Kimberly Cox, Helendale
Keith Dyas, Rosamond
Robert Pearce, Chalfant

Amy Horne, Ph.D., Truckee
Essra Mostafavi, Bishop
Rick Dever, Crestline

State Water Board

Elizabeth Beryt, Office of Chief Counsel

Nichole Morgan, State Water Board

Water Board Staff

Mike Plaziak, Executive Officer
Jan Zimmerman, Sr. Engineering Geologist
Timothy Middlemis-Clark, Supv. WRC Engineer
Dan Sussman, Sr. Environmental Scientist
Yvonne West, Director, Office of Enforcement
Jennifer Watts, Environmental Scientist

Ben Letton, Asst. Executive Officer
Andrew Jensen, Environmental Program Mgr.
Trevor Miller, Sr. WRC Engineer
Laurie Scribe, Senior Environmental Scientist
Shelby Barker, Senior Engineering Geologist
Katrina Fleshman, Board Clerk

[View the full Agenda and listen to the audio of this meeting](#)

DR. AMY HORNE, CHAIR | MICHAEL R. PLAZIAK, PG, EXECUTIVE OFFICER

REGULAR MEETING: Wednesday, October 2, 2024, at 9:00 a.m.**CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS**

The Water Board Chair, Dr. Amy Horne, called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. The Board Chair, Dr. Horne, introduced the Water Board Members, and the Water Board staff, and discussed procedures for in-person and video and teleconference meetings.

1. PUBLIC FORUM

No public comments.

2. MINUTES

Motion: Moved by Member Dr. Cox, seconded by Member Rob Pearce, to approve August 19-20, 2024, meeting Minutes as presented. Board Chair Dr. Horne called for a roll call vote and the motion carried per the following votes:

Board Chair Dr. Horne	Aye
Member Dr. Cox	Aye
Member Dyas	Aye
Member Mostafavi	Aye
Member Pearce	Aye
Member Dever	Aye

[View the adopted August 19-20, 2024, Meeting Minutes](#)

3. REPORTS BY WATER BOARD CHAIR AND WATER BOARD MEMBERS

Water Board Vice-Chair, Essra Mostafavi gave report on Artificial Intelligence, and how it can enhance the work we do at the Lahontan Water Board.

Water Board Chair, Dr. Horne the Water Quality Control Committee (WQCC) meeting was postponed. Lahontan is planning a Board member retreat on November 12, 2024, and would like to discuss Board member expectations. The State Water Board will be bringing forward the topic of Shared Expectations at the next WQCC meeting.

Nichole Morgan, State Water Board Liaison, gave an update on the approval of a more efficient water use, to take effect January 1, 2025. Ms. Morgan also provided an update on the Storm water permits workshop held on September 5, 2024.

4. EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

The Assistant Executive Officer Ben Letton, provided an update to the Water Board and public on key actions and activities in the Lahontan region, including the items below.

- a. State Budget cuts (working on proposal to State Board)
- b. Water Board and League to Save Lake Tahoe Staff Partner to Communicate Accurate News
- c. Laurel Pond Groundwater Investigation Study and Updated Monitoring Well Network, Town of Mammoth Lakes
- d. Lake Tahoe Water Quality Update

- e. Senate Bill (SB) 630
- f. Increase field presence
- g. Unauthorized Discharge Reports/2nd Quarter Violations Report
- h. 2025 Standing items changes
- i. 2025 Water Board meeting schedule

COMMENTS BY WATER BOARD MEMBERS

Water Board member, Dr. Cox asked if Water Board staff could post the HABs article in a tab on the Lahontan public website. Ms. Fiore-Wagner indicated that Lahontan staff is working on getting a link to these articles for the public. Ms. Fiore-Wagner also indicated that information on how to recognize a HAB, report a bloom, and links to healthy water habits are easily accessible to the public from our Announcement section of our public facing webpage. Ms. Fiore-Wagner went on to say we can work on reaching out to additional partners in the region and see if they can maybe link it from their website to these resources directly.

Water Board Vice-Chair, Ms. Mostafavi asked about Bates stamp 4-24, item four, Laurel Pond groundwater investigation and if team UES was doing other investigations that aren't just nutrients. The reason for her concern is, they are looking at other endocrine disruptors, PFOS, microplastics, things like that. Garrett Higer, District Engineer with the Mammoth Community Water District, replied our proposal is to look at other constituents as well. And to look at the more holistic look at the fate of nitrogen in the pond to better understand what's happening with the aquatic life in the pond.

Water Board member, Dever, asked Mr. Higer if in the summer, when you do the tertiary, is all of it get all your fluent, get treated to that specification tertiary? Or do you have some that's not treated during the summer. Mr. Higer replied, during the summer whatever remainder that's not used by the golf courses is discharged to Laurel Pond. There's no demand for recycled water in the winter and we're still meeting our discharge requirement at Laurel Pond year-round.

Water Board Chair, Dr. Horne asked with all the research that has been done on Nearshore water quality if there is any evidence of a need for a nearshore water quality objective. Water Board staff, Mary Fiore-Wagner, replied that Lahontan staff has been having some conversations with the Science Council to re-invigorate the Nearshore Monitoring Network, a series of about 10 stations that measure water quality. The Water Board Chair, Dr. Horne also asked if microplastics were affecting clarity. Ms. Fiore-Wagner said it is unknown if microplastics affect Lake Tahoe's water clarity, but data indicates that the amount of microplastics measured in Lake Tahoe is insignificant relative to the amount of fine sediment particles present in Lake Tahoe. Microplastics may affect the way particles aggregate in the water column. Ms. Fiore-Wagner also indicated that Monica Arienzo with Desert Research Institute received funding to study microplastics and her research may evaluate effects on clarity. Aside from studying effects on clarity, research should investigate whether microplastics may be impacting on the health of aquatic organisms.

5. HOT CREEK FISH HATCHERY AND WATER QUALITY OBJECTIVES UPDATE

Water Board staff, Trevor Miller, Senior Water Resource Control Engineer provided an update on the Hot Creek Fish Hatchery Siting and Background, and 2021 NPDES Order and Time Schedule Order (TSO).

Mathew Norris, Senior Environmental Scientist, from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, gave an overview of the Groundwater Well Construction Timeline. Mr. Norris further discussed a status on the Hot Creek Fish Hatchery data collection and delays.

Water Board staff, Jennifer Watts, Environmental Scientist, presented an overview of the progress on a proposed basin plan amendment identified in the previous triennial review.

COMMENTS BY WATER BOARD MEMBERS

Water Board Vice-Chair, Mostafavi, asked CDFW staff how is CDFW monitoring the impact of nitrogen levels on downstream water quality, particularly in sensitive ecosystems? Mr. Morris replied CDFW is monitoring through their current NPDES permit. And as Ms. Watts outlined, CDFW is also collecting nitrogen samples in all the points.

Water Board Chair, Dr. Horne asked where the nitrate is coming from in the influent groundwater and whether this new total nitrogen water quality objective will allow for anthropomorphic sources of nitrogen coming into the fish hatchery. Water Board staff, Ms. Watts replied that the main thing that we want to do is set an objective that's protective of the uses we don't know exactly the amount of data that was used to set those numbers.

6. 2024 ANNUAL ENFORCEMENT PROGRAM

Water Board staff, Shelby Barker, Senior Engineering Geologist, presented a summary of violations and enforcement activities for the 2023/2024 fiscal year and discuss priorities for the 2024/2025 fiscal year.

Yvonne West, Director from State Water Board, Office of Enforcement, presented an overview of the State Water Board Enforcement Policy, Statewide Water Quality Enforcement training, and additional Office of Enforcement updates

COMMENTS BY WATER BOARD MEMBERS

Water Board member, Mr. Dyas, asked Ms. Barker to explain why it appears there's a decreasing trend in the number of formal enforcement actions, and in fact showed none for fiscal years 23 and 24. Water Board staff, Ms. Barker replied for fiscal year 23/24 it is the amount of time it takes to go from informal enforcement and to finalize formal enforcement is going to be more than one fiscal year.

Water Board member Dr. Cox asked regarding the 28% of verbal enforcement and does this indicate that staff are interacting with our regulated community in-person. And how have we been able to adjust staffing to get that external communication? Ms. Barker replied that the various divisions interact with the community. Ms. Barker went on to explain that Lahontan has a lot of permits with a field compliance component, and staff have worked with supervisors to adjust their work plans to

allow for more field presence. And being able to get more field presence and compliance, by verbal enforcement, can significantly reduce the number of either violations down the road or any additional enforcement actions that have to occur.

Water Board Vice-Chair, Ms. Mostafavi asked how the updated enforcement policy will ensure timely and targeted enforcement actions in areas where public drinking water supplies at risk. Water Board staff, Ms. Barker, replied when we prioritize our violations as far as the enforcement actions we're taking against those alleged violations, that is one of the components we look at is whether or not, if I've got to compare apples to apple sites and one of them is in a disadvantaged community, that would be the one we'd prioritize.

7. CLIMATE CHANGE PROGRAM ANNUAL REPORT

Water Board staff, Laurie Scribe, Senior Environmental Scientist, presented the annual report to the Board and public. Ms. Scribe summarized the progress made in implementing the Climate Change Action Plan and Resolution R6T-2019-0277, Climate Change update Mitigation and Adaptation Strategy.

COMMENTS BY WATER BOARD MEMBERS

Water Board member, Mr. Dyas asked regarding the slide that's titled FY 24-25 Proposed Actions, Ms. Scribe mentioned supplemental environmental projects. Mr. Dyas asked if there are any specific projects in mind or were she simply illustrating the need for SEPs. Water Board staff, Ms. Scribe replied Lahontan wants to try and foster more relationships with partners that could bring SEP projects to the table so that in the event there are enforcement actions that could offset the liabilities with SEPs that we have more available in our region.

Water Board member, Vice-Chair, Mostafavi asked about the challenges or delays staff have encountered in integrating climate change elements into the SWAMP Program, and how does this impact the region's water quality management? Water Board staff, Ms. Scribe replied that the project was delayed due to delays with the Office of Information Management Assessment who manages the contracts we are using for support. Some of the delays were through their contracting processes. While we're in this interim period, we are still running our routine monitoring program. Currently we are still collecting quarterly monitoring at our long-term trend sites. We are still working on special projects collecting data for various regulatory programs. There's not any gap in the data collection efforts that are occurring right now. I would like to think there's not a water quality impact occurring from those delays.

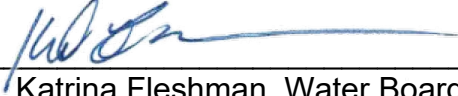
8. CLOSED SESSION

The Water Board members did not go into Closed Session on Wednesday, October 2, 2024.

ADJOURNMENT

Before Adjournment, Water Board Chair, Dr. Horne, read a tribute to Water Board member, Keith Dyas, who has decided not to continue as a Water Board member.

With no further business to come before the Water Board, the meeting adjourned at 12:43 p.m. on October 2, 2024.

Prepared by:  Adopted: 11/13/2024
Katrina Fleshman, Water Board Clerk