



October 27, 2015

Mr. Bruce Wilcox
Assistant Secretary for Salton Sea Policy
Natural Resources Agency

Via email: Bruce.Wilcox@resources.ca.gov

RE: Recommendations for November 4th Salton Sea meeting and next steps

Dear Assistant Secretary Wilcox:

Thank you for leading the “Salton Sea Strategic Vision and Action Plan Meeting” on October 14th in Sacramento. We were very encouraged to see the large turnout and enthusiasm at the meeting, reflecting the growing optimism for the future of the Salton Sea. In response to your request, we write to offer our recommendations for next steps, with particular emphasis on the meeting scheduled for November 4th in the Salton Sea basin.

The Salton Sea Task Force Agency Actions, released on October 9th, offer an excellent framework and should guide the State’s efforts. The Task Force’s very first action states “Begin immediate implementation and further development of Salton Sea management plan.”

We recommend that this emphasis on an accelerated timeline and immediate implementation form the basis for the November 4th meeting. We believe that the SSRREI’s water supply and distribution system, described in chapter 6 of the *draft SSRREI Framework*, will be critical to the implementation of any Salton Sea management plan. Therefore, we suggest that the November 4th meeting focus on articulating a clear path for implementation of the task force recommendations with a particular emphasis on the accelerated implementation of this SSRREI’s water supply and distribution system. As time permits, the meeting should also continue the discussion of short-term and medium-term Salton Sea management plans.

To provide the stakeholders with a clear picture of how the state will move forward with the Task Force recommendations and how it will accelerate project implementation and delivery, we recommend that the November 4th meeting discuss and draft timelines for completion of the following tasks:

- Review the Task Force Agency Actions and describe any general Natural Resources Agency plans to implement these actions;

- Identify the “team” of state officials and staff who will be working with you on the Salton Sea issues and the duties for which they are tasked, including officials and staff at the California Energy Commission, the Public Utilities Commission, and the Independent System Operator. This is similar to the creation of an organizational chart. This information will help clarify who is doing what as part of your efforts to carry out the Task Force recommendations;
- Provide an update of the partnership between the federal and state agencies, including the status of a federal and state memorandum of understanding (MOU);
- Present a timeline and critical path elements for implementing the Task Force Agency Actions;
- Describe the water supply and distribution system (“infrastructure”);
- Develop initial budget estimates for the accelerated implementation of the infrastructure;
- Develop an accelerated timeline for the infrastructure project, including the identification of critical path elements;
- Identify and describe existing Salton Sea-related permits and the extent to which they can be used to implement the infrastructure;
- Conduct a rapid analysis of “no regrets” air quality and habitat projects that can proceed in conjunction with the infrastructure;
- Identify and describe additional permits that will need to be obtained, along with relevant lead and regulatory agencies;
- Identify existing Salton Sea-related contracts with consultants that could be modified quickly to cover new tasks related to the design, environmental compliance, and permitting of the infrastructure backbone;
- Identify the objectives, budget, meeting schedule, and membership of the Science Advisory Committee;
- Develop potential roles and actions for the Salton Sea Authority and other stakeholders;
- Create workgroups with clear objectives and deadlines to complete any of the above tasks before the end of the year;
- Develop a public outreach schedule, including quarterly meetings in the Salton Sea region in both Riverside and Imperial Counties, in English and Spanish, and noticed in both languages, as well as periodic briefings for legislative and agency staffs in Sacramento.

We acknowledge that this is a long list for a less than four hour meeting. Fortunately, several of these tasks can be accomplished in advance. The results can be summarized quickly at the meeting with appropriate handouts and graphics, such as an organization chart, a map depicting the extent of existing permitted activities, and charts showing critical path timelines. Preparation and distribution

of these materials will underscore the agency's commitment to meeting the Task Force's accelerated timeline.

This meeting will be an important benchmark in the Salton Sea effort and will be an opportunity to demonstrate to the various stakeholders that the state is fully prepared to address the issues at the Salton Sea in a timely manner. We are very encouraged by the issuance of the Task Force recommendations and look forward to working with you to protect the communities and wildlife at the Salton Sea.

Sincerely,



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