



**DRAFT**

**SUMMARY OCTOBER 26, 2023  
DELTA STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL MEETING**

For review and adoption by the Council at the November 16, meeting.

All meeting materials, presentations, and comment letters are available at  
<https://deltacouncil.ca.gov/council-meetings>

**MEETING SUMMARY**

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**1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

Chair Virginia Madueño called the meeting to order at 9:30 AM on October 26, 2023, at the California Natural Resource Agency building at 715 P Street, Room 221 Sacramento, CA 95817.

**2. ROLL CALL – ESTABLISH A QUORUM (WATER CODE §85210.5)**

Roll call was taken, and a quorum was established. The following councilmembers were present: Burgis, Hueso, Lee, Mehranian, Zingale, and Madueño.

Councilmember Damrell was absent.

**3. PUBLIC COMMENT**

*Deirdre Des Jardins, with California Water Research, noted her concern about conflicts of interest surrounding the current Delta Lead Scientist.*

The agenda item is viewable on the linked agenda at <https://bit.ly/3MBpcuM>, minute 00:01:55.

**4. CONSIDERATION AND POSSIBLE APPOINTMENT OF A DELTA LEAD SCIENTIST (ACTION ITEM) (including Resolution 2023-08)**

Chair Madueño provided an overview of the process of appointing an interim Delta Lead Scientist while the recruitment process for a Delta Lead Scientist is being completed, and introduced Dr. Lisa Wainger to present the Delta Independent Science Board's (ISB) recommendation of Dr. Lisamarie Windham-Myers. Dr. Wainger presented Dr. Windham-Myers' qualifications for the position and some background on her career. Dr. Windham-Myers shared her interest in the position.

Chair Madueño shared her appreciation of Dr. Windham-Myers' attendance at the Delta ISB's Subsidence workshop last week and highlighted Dr. Windham-Myers background and experience and her excitement for her to step into this position.

Chair Madueño asked for public comment.

There was no public comment at this time.

**Motion** (approve Resolution 2023-08): offered by Councilmember Hueso, seconded by Councilmember Mehranian.

**Vote:** 6/0 - The motion was adopted (Burgis: Aye, Damrell: Absent, Hueso: Aye, Lee: Aye, Mehranian: Aye, Zingale: Aye, Madueño: Aye)

Chair Madueño thanked Dr. Larsen for her work as the Delta Lead Scientist and extended appreciation to Dr. Windham-Myers for stepping into this position.

One public comment came in after the vote.

*Public Comment*

*Deirdre Des Jardins, with California Water Research, shared her appreciation for the United States Geological Survey researchers and reiterated her concerns about the possibility of conflicts of interest with the current Delta Lead Scientist.*

The agenda item is viewable on the linked agenda at <https://bit.ly/3MBpcuM>, minute 00:06:10.

**5. CONSIDERATION AND POSSIBLE APPOINTMENT OF A DELTA INDEPENDENT SCIENCE BOARD MEMBER (ACTION ITEM)**

Dr. Larsen congratulated Dr. Windham-Myers on her appointment and provided background on the appointment of a Delta ISB member. Dr. Larsen provided an overview of the recruitment process and shared that the recruitment committee unanimously voted for Dr. Kenneth Rose. Dr. Larsen provided background on Dr. Rose's career and his qualifications for the position. Dr. Larsen recommended Dr. Rose to be appointed to the Delta ISB.

Chair Madueño asked for public comment.

There was no public comment at this time.

Councilmember Mehranian and Dr. Larsen discussed the composition of the Delta ISB, the diverse expertise of the Delta ISB, and how the Delta ISB composition changes to meet emerging needs in coordination with the Delta Lead Scientist. Councilmember Burgis and Dr. Larsen discussed the presence of social scientists on the Delta ISB.

A request for public comment came after the Councilmember discussion.

*Public Comment*

*Deirdre Des Jardins, with California Water Research, shared that there is a lot of uncertainty concerning marine heat waves globally. Des Jardins recommended that*

*there should be more publicly open meetings to share more information in this time of accelerating climate impacts and great uncertainty.*

**Motion** (appoint Dr. Rose to the Delta Independent Science Board) offered by Councilmember Lee, seconded by Councilmember Mehranian.

**Vote:** 6/0 - The motion was adopted (Burgis: Aye, Damrell: Absent, Hueso: Aye, Lee: Aye, Mehranian: Aye, Zingale: Aye, Madueño: Aye)

The agenda item is viewable on the linked agenda at <https://bit.ly/3MBpcuM>, minute 00:18:11.

## **6. CONSENT CALENDAR (ACTION ITEM)**

### **a. Adoption of September 28, 2023, Meeting Summary**

Chair Madueño presented the agenda item for adopting the consent calendar.

Chair Madueño asked for public comment.

There was no public comment.

**Motion** (approve the consent calendar): offered by Councilmember Hueso, seconded by Councilmember Mehranian.

**Vote:** 6/0 - The motion was adopted (Burgis: Aye, Damrell: Absent, Hueso: Aye, Lee: Aye, Mehranian: Aye, Zingale: Aye, Madueño: Aye)

The agenda item is viewable on the linked agenda at <https://bit.ly/3MBpcuM>, minute 00:32:21.

## **7. CHAIR'S REPORT (INFORMATION ITEM)**

Chair Madueño reported on her attendance at a Metropolitan Water District Committee meeting in Los Angeles with Executive Officer Pearson and shared how productive the meeting was and the importance of meeting with water districts. Chair Madueño next congratulated the Delta ISB on an excellent subsidence workshop, she highlighted the Delta farmers sharing their experiences and perspectives. Chair Madueño next shared about her opportunity to meet with California State Parks Director Armando Quintero and Boating and Waterways Deputy Directory Ramona Fernandez and the discussions they had around improving collaboration and partnership with State Parks.

Councilmember Mehranian and Chair Madueño highlighted the importance of meeting with the Metropolitan Water District and increased collaboration between the Council and water districts.

### **a. Delta Plan Interagency Implementation Committee Preview**

Amanda Bohl, Special Assistant for Planning and Science began with a pre-recorded video featuring Chair Madueño to promote the upcoming Delta Plan Interagency Implementation Committee (DPIIC) November 7th gathering in Sausalito. Bohl highlighted the areas of focus of the meeting including integrated modeling. There will be a diverse panel to talk about the role of the Delta Science Program and DPIIC in promoting modeling and sharing more about the modeling collaboratory being led by UC Berkeley with representatives from the California Legislature Speaker's office, the Department of Water Resources, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and the State Water Resources Control Board. Bohl also highlighted a presentation from the Council's Delta Adapts team. Finally, Bohl, outlined the release of the Delta Crosscut Budget Report at this meeting with a future presentation to be brought to the Council in November.

Chair Madueño thanked Bohl for all her work and leadership with DPIIC and the importance of continued collaboration with all the different state agencies involved in the Delta.

Chair Madueño asked for public comment.

*Public Comment*

*Deirdre Des Jardins, with California Water Research, highlighted research that would be helpful to include in the California climate adaptation work exploring El Niño trends. Des Jardins also shared she has been advocating that the Integrated Modeling Steering Committee meet publicly to incorporate more stakeholder feedback.*

The agenda item is viewable on the linked agenda at <https://bit.ly/3MBpcuM>, minute 00:33:05.

**8. EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT (INFORMATION ITEM)**

Executive Officer Jessica Pearson reported that there were no pending covered action certifications this month. Pearson next highlighted that the presentation she and Chair Madueño gave at the Metropolitan Water District's Bay Delta Committee was recorded and archived online, available on their website. Pearson next reviewed the letter sent from the Council to the City of Sacramento regarding the Draft Master Environmental Impact Report for the City of Sacramento 2040 General Plan Update and Climate Action & Adaptation Plan. Next, Pearson reported on the letter sent to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife about the Staten Island Wetland Restoration and Carbon Farming for Habitat, Climate and Communities Project. Pearson next reviewed a letter sent from the Council to the Regional Water Authority regarding the Notice of Preparation of an Environmental Impact Report for the Sacramento Regional Water Bank, and a letter sent to the County of Contra Costa's Department of Conservation and Development regarding the Notice of Preparation of an Environmental Impact Report for the Contra Costa County 2045 General Plan and Climate Action Plan Update. Lastly, Pearson highlighted a letter from Congressman John Garamendi to the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors regarding a proposed green waste processing project in the Delta Primary Zone. Pearson reported that Council staff have been coordinating with County staff regarding the project and will be meeting with Congressman Garamendi's office next week to better understand their concerns.

Pearson introduced Hannah Chaney, who joined the Planning and Performance Division as a Senior Environmental Scientist.

Pearson closed with an overview of the Outreach Highlights Report, the Quarterly Contract Report, and the Active Projects List.

**a. Legal Update**

Chief Council Jorge Aguilar introduced the Delta Stewardship Council's Legal Extern Rebecca Wilson, who provided a case update on a recent case regarding CEQA challenges to DWR's Environmental Impact Report prepared as part of its Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) relicensing of the Oroville hydropower facilities (County of Butte vs, Department of Water Resources – April 2023 decision).

Councilmember Zingale, Councilmember Mehranian, Dr. Larson, Aguilar, and Wilson discussed accountability for climate crisis and change, future dates for project work, transparency in and accessibility around modeling and modeling results, and the scientific process.

Chair Madueño closed with a comment on “best available science” and scientific uncertainty continuing to be an issue in the future before asking the Executive Officer to continue.

**b. Legislative Update (Action Item)**

There was no Legislative Update.

Chair Madueño asked for public comment.

*Public Comment*

*California Water Research's Dierdre Des Jardins commented on climate modeling in the ARkStorm 2.0 scenario and expressed concern about litigation scenarios that have populations at risk.*

The item is viewable on the linked agenda at <https://bit.ly/3MBpcuM>, minute 00:49:01.

**9. LEAD SCIENTIST REPORT (INFORMATION ITEM)**

Lead Scientist Dr. Laurel Larsen began with her monthly article highlight:

*Vuckovic D, MacDonald JA, Lin D, Mendez M, Miller E, Mitch WA. Pharmaceuticals, pesticides, and ultraviolet filters in wastewater discharges to San Francisco Bay as*

*drivers of ecotoxicity. Environ Pollut. 2023 Aug 22;336:122432. doi: 10.1016/j.envpol.2023.122432. Epub ahead of print. PMID: 37611792*

Dr. Larsen summarized the main points of the article using a visual aid.

Contaminants of emerging concern (CECs) cover a broad class of chemicals that are used in daily life, pose toxicological threats to humans or nonhuman components of ecosystems, and are rarely monitored in the environment. They are particularly understudied in the Bay-Delta ecosystem and hence are prioritized in the 2022-2026 Science Action Agenda. Among CECs, some of the least studied contaminants include those in consumer sunscreens—including sunscreens that have been made illegal in Hawaii because of their damage to coral reefs—and pesticides used in urban environments.

This study, a research collaboration between investigators at Stanford and the San Francisco Estuary Institute, aimed to address this gap by measuring five representative pharmaceuticals, 11 pesticides or pesticide degradation products, and five chemicals found in sunscreen, from six wastewater treatment plants (WWTPs) contributing outflow to the San Francisco Bay. They then used a hydrodynamic model to determine how the contaminants would be diluted within the Bay and compared resulting concentrations to ecotoxicity thresholds (i.e., concentrations at which there are adverse effects for aquatic life).

Dr. Larsen highlighted the Social Science Integration Team Updates:

- In September, Delta Stewardship Council (Council) staff convened the Bay-Delta Social Science Community of Practice (CoP) for its quarterly meeting.
- The Delta Science Program contracted with the National Center for Environmental Analysis and Synthesis (NCEAS) to provide training and synthesis support to agency staff and academics across the Bay-Delta to conduct research that integrates human dimensions of the Delta into management decision-making.
- Supported the research team that has led the Delta Residents Survey (report-out included as a separate staff report).



Dr. Larsen provided comments on the Delta Research Awards Update and Collaborative Science Survey. The Delta Science Program is projecting to release its biennial solicitation for Delta Research Awards in November 2024 (available here: <https://deltacouncil.ca.gov/delta-science-program/delta-science-proposalsolicitations>).

Dr. Larsen continued with a discussion on the California Sea Grant State Policy Fellows program and how the Delta Stewardship Council has long partnered with California Sea Grant to recruit and administer awards to Delta Science Fellows, host State Policy Fellows, and, most recently, administer its Delta Research Awards program.

In its September meeting, the Council approved the latest contract with California Sea Grant. On October 16-18, Council staff participated in a matching workshop to recruit the 2024 cohort of California Sea Grant State Policy fellows to the Council. This year, the Council is recruiting five fellows, who will work within the Adaptive Management Unit, Collaborative Science and Peer Review unit, the science funding team, Science Communication, Synthesis, and Decision Support unit, and the Planning and Performance Division. The Council has benefited tremendously from hosting previous cohorts of State Policy Fellows, with 39 fellows hosted since 2013.

Dr. Larsen introduced Steve Culberson to offer information to the Council on the Chesapeake Global Collaboratory Summit. On September 28-29, Dr. Steve Culberson, Interagency Ecological Program Lead Scientist, and Delta Science Program manager, formed part of a California delegation that attended the Chesapeake Global Collaboratory Summit in Baltimore, Maryland.

Dr. Culberson provided comments about his impressions and insights into the next steps for Delta's Collaboratory.

Chair Madueño reiterated the need for something similar in California and the need for transparency and acculturation moving forward.

Dr. Larsen closed with a brief highlight on:

- Tidal Wetland Restoration Symposium – Dylan Chapple, Delta Science Program Environmental Program Manager, will lead a panel at the symposium focused on the implementation of adaptive management as it relates to the Delta Plan.
- The Delta Breeze Newsletter - The Delta Science Program’s Delta Breeze Newsletter is produced twice a year, with brief articles that highlight efforts, initiatives, and research funded by the Science Program.
- A presentation of the “By the Numbers” report.

Councilmember Burgis and Dr. Larsen discussed a previous sentiment of trust in the Delta, its importance, the concept of acculturation, the separation of entities doing the work, how there are efforts to bring more people together, and how she (Burgis) is committed to making that happen.

Councilmember Hueso and Dr. Larsen discussed salinity sources in the Delta including legacy sources, agricultural salinity, and treated water.

Chair Madueño asked for public comment.

*Public Comment*

*California Water Research’s Dierdre Des Jardins commented on stakeholder concerns about modeling technical committees.*

The item is viewable on the linked agenda at <https://bit.ly/3MBpcuM>, minute 01:15:07.

**10. DELTA RESIDENTS SURVEY UPDATE (INFORMATION ITEM)**

Dr. Larsen introduced Dr. Jessica Rudnick, a social science extension specialist for the California Sea Grant and Delta Stewardship Council and provided a brief description of the agenda item.

The panel consisted of Mayra Adame, a research analyst for the Institute for Social Research, Robert Rodriguez, the project coordinator for the Institute for Social

Research, Kenji Tomari, a data analyst, and a Ph.D. student at UC Davis, Kristin Dobbin, an assistant professor of the cooperative extension at UC Berkeley (ag and natural resources), and Mark Lubell, a social scientist working in the Delta and a UC Davis Professor in the Department of Environmental Science and Policy.

Dr. Rudnick and Tomari presented the Delta Residents Survey results, a first effort of its kind in the Delta to develop a rigorous survey research approach to begin to assess important social indicators of Delta residents' well-being, including community members' sense of place, quality of life, experiences and attitudes toward environmental and climate change, and civic engagement.

Councilmember Burgis and Dr. Rudnick discussed the consistency of data with the demographic makeup of those communities, which held biases prevalent in most survey results.

Councilmember Hueso provided comments on the identity of Delta residents, the variety of people living in the Delta, contradictory interests, the future requirements of Delta residents, and an improved understanding on strategy perspectives for future surveys.

Councilmember Mehranian and Dr. Rudnick discussed the survey being the first layer of analysis, how delving deeper would give less generalized data, clarification of specific challenges, the implications and concerns of applying statements in a generalized way, and comparing data with national/statewide averages.

Councilmember Lee, Dr. Rudnick, and Rodriguez discussed follow-up strategies to inform respondents of survey results. Chair Madueño echoed these thoughts and added an ask if we could get feedback on social media, regarding individual responses, to solicit feedback for the survey.

Councilmember Zingale, Dr. Rudnick, Rodriguez, Adame, Dobbin, and Councilmember Burgis discussed the trust residents had for different organizations, and people, leveraging trust to get more participation, consideration of limitations for the underserved and migratory communities, social media, listening sessions, sample quality, convenience sampling, and survey design topic discussions, the resource and expertise limitations for the pilot survey, Delta as a place, listening to hear, historical events impacting data, Delta diversity, answer results from Zone 3

survey group, climate change, multi-generation data knowledge, and social well-being.

Chair Madueño asked for public comment.

*Public Comment*

*California Water Research's Dierdre Des Jardins commented on the heterogeneousness of the Delta, and that the data presented resonated with her experience. Des Jardins advocated for strategies for data gathering in the Delta, the allowance for meaningful representation in decision-making scenarios, and working towards network weaving.*

Chair Madueño provided comments on the disconnect between the identity data for Delta residents before closing the agenda item.

The item is viewable on the linked agenda at <https://bit.ly/3MBpcuM>, minute 02:01:18.

## **11. PREPARATION FOR THE NEXT COUNCIL MEETING**

The next Council meeting will take place on November 16. Please refer to the posted meeting notice 10 days before the meeting for further information or updates.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:15 p.m.

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