



**DRAFT**

**SUMMARY JULY 24, 2025**

**DELTA STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL MEETING**

For review and adoption by the Council at the August 28, 2025, 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 Julie Lee called the meeting to order at 9:30 AM on July 24, 2025, at the California Natural Resources Agency at 715 P Street, Room 2-221, Sacramento, California 95814.

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

Roll call was taken, and a quorum was established (Government Code § 11123). The following councilmembers were present: Burgis, Damrell, Hueso, Zingale, and Lee.

Vice Chair Miller and Councilmember Mehranian were absent from this meeting.

**3. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Chair Lee asked for public comment.

There was no public comment in Sacramento or Eureka.

The agenda item is viewable on the linked agenda at <https://bit.ly/3HLo88r>, minute 00:01:23.

**4. CONSENT CALENDAR (ACTION ITEM)**

**5a. Adoption of June 26, 2025, Meeting Summary**

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

Chair Lee asked for public comment

There was no public comment in Sacramento or Eureka.

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

**Vote:** 5/0 - The motion was adopted (Burgis: Aye, Damrell: Aye, Hueso: Aye, Zingale: Aye, Lee: Aye, Mehranian: Absent, Miller: Absent)

The agenda item is viewable on the linked agenda at <https://bit.ly/3HLo88r>, minute 00:01:48.

**5. Consideration and Possible Appointment of Delta Independent Science Board Members (Action Item)**

Chair Lee opened the discussion by explaining that Water Code Section 85280 designates the Council as the appointing authority for the Delta Independent Science Board members, highlighting the Council's role before turning the discussion over to the Delta Lead Scientist, Dr. Lismarie Windham-Myers.

Dr. Lismarie Windham-Myers reported on the search to fill current and upcoming vacancies on the Delta Independent Science Board and provided recommendations to the Council for possible appointments.

Councilmember Burgis thanked Delta ISB members for their past and current service. She emphasized the importance of having a unified vision on issues and concerns, the value of diverse backgrounds in candidates, the inclusion of seismic expertise in the candidate search, and shared thoughts on the decline of science at the Federal level before presenting a motion.

Councilmember Zingale seconded the motion and thanked Dr. Lismarie Windham-Myers and her team for retaining members and maintaining high-quality skill sets among the members.

Chair Lee asked for public comment.

There was no public comment in Sacramento or Eureka.

Chair Lee expressed her thoughts on the candidates' distinguished abilities. She thanked Dr. Virginia Dale, Dr. Bob Naiman, and Dr. Thomas Holzer for their service and contributions to her knowledge.

Before the vote, Chair Lee clarified the voting procedure, explaining the difference between voting as a slate versus individually. Chair Lee asked if any member wanted to discuss or vote separately on any of the recommended appointments. Burgis stated that she was motioning for "slate" voting, and there were no other objections from the Council.

Chair Lee specified that the proposed motion was for the following six appointments to the Delta Independent Science Board:

- Dr. Peter Goodwin - First term appointment from October 1, 2025, to September 30, 2030.
- Dr. Cathleen Jones - First term appointment from September 1, 2025, to August 31, 2030.
- Dr. Steve Lindley - First term appointment from September 1, 2025, to August 31, 2030.
- Dr. Tanya Heikkila - Second term appointment from September 1, 2025, to August 31, 2030.
- Dr. Diane McKnight - Second term appointment from September 1, 2025, to August 31, 2030.
- Dr. Lisa Wainger - Second term appointment from September 1, 2025, to August 31, 2030.

Chair Lee asked for a second. Councilmember Zingale seconded the motion.

**Motion:** (Appointment of Delta Independent Science Board Members as specified by Chair Lee (above)): offered by Councilmember Burgis, seconded by Councilmember Zingale.

**Vote:** 5/0 - The motion was adopted (Burgis: Aye, Damrell: Aye, Hueso: Aye, Zingale: Aye, Lee: Aye, Mehranian: Absent, Miller: Absent)

The agenda item is viewable on the linked agenda at <https://bit.ly/3HLo88r>, minute 00:02:45.

## **6. DELTA STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL APPEAL PROCESS OVERVIEW**

Executive Officer Jessica Pearson expressed her excitement about ongoing collaboration with the new and existing Delta ISB candidates before introducing the agenda item.

Before handing the presentation to Deputy Executive Officer for Planning and Performance Jeff Henderson, Pearson clarified that the upcoming presentation will explain the Council's appeal process and its authority over covered action appeals, with the aim to improve public understanding of the process, including its parts, requirements, and the decision timeline.

Henderson, provided an overview of the Council's appeal process, which includes components such as filing a certification of consistency and appeals, holding a hearing, and the issuance of a decision.

Councilmember Zingale, Chief Counsel Jorge Aguilar, and Henderson discussed the recertification of remanded issues and the process for determining new versus old issues.

Councilmember Burgis thanked Henderson for the presentation and asked that it be added to the Council website. Burgis, Aguilar, and Henderson discussed the certification of consistency processes related to Delta Plan policy requirements. They explained how each policy has two parts: one defining what activity it covers, and another establishing the requirements for determining consistency, as well as the steps an appellant must take to file an appeal.

Councilmember Burgis concluded by discussing with Aguilar her role as Chair of the Delta Protection Commission and its relevance to the appeals process.

Chair Lee concluded with a statement regarding Delta Plan policies, noting that the description and compliance of these policies are topics that submitting agencies may address before submitting a claim. Henderson reiterated her remarks by encouraging submitting agencies to utilize the early consultation process.

Chair Lee asked for public comment.

There was no public comment in Sacramento or Eureka.

Chair Lee adjourned the meeting for a short break (to reconvene at 10:25 AM).

The agenda item is viewable on the linked agenda at <https://bit.ly/3HLo88r>, minute 00:15:24.

**7. SACRAMENTO AREA COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS DRAFT 2025  
METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION PLAN/SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES  
STRATEGY (ACTION ITEM)**

Chair Lee reconvened the meeting at 10:25 AM.

Chair Lee briefly introduced the agenda item.

Jeff Henderson, Delta Stewardship Council's Deputy Executive Officer for Planning and Performance, and Kacey Lizon, Metropolitan Transportation's Deputy Executive Director for Planning and Programs, presented on the Sacramento Area Council of Governments' Draft 2025 MTP/Sustainable Communities Strategy.

The presentation from the Sacramento Area Council of Governments detailed the Draft Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy and its connection to the Delta Plan. It also included a review of the Council's authority on regional plans and land use (Delta Reform Act (WC 85212 and 85057.5)), the current SACOG's 2025 Blueprint and its relation to the Delta, SACOG's presentation of the 2025 Blueprint, a draft review comment letter, and a discussion, followed by a staff recommendation by Henderson.

Staff recommended that the Council approve Resolution 2025-09 finding the 2025 Blueprint is not inconsistent with the Delta Plan and approve submitting the 2025 Blueprint and Draft EIR comment letter.

Councilmember Burgis discussed the connection between housing and transportation, jobs and incentives, and the burdens on fringe roads that are not shown on the project map.

Councilmember Hueso, Henderson, and Lizon discussed the planned/existing railway locations, connections, challenges (funding), supposed future appeals issues, and active projects (environmental reviews and development).

Chair Lee asked for public comment.

There was no public comment in Sacramento or Eureka.

Chair Lee called for a vote.

**Motion** (approve Resolution 2025-09): offered by Councilmember Hueso, seconded by Councilmember Burgis.

**Vote:** 5/0 - The motion was adopted (Burgis: Aye, Damrell: Aye, Hueso: Aye, Zingale: Aye, Lee: Aye, Mehranian: Absent, Miller: Absent)

The agenda item is viewable on the linked agenda at <https://bit.ly/3HLo88r>, minute 00:43:37.

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

Chair Lee started by discussing the Texas floods and expressing her gratitude and appreciation for the planners and their role in the recovery process.

Chair Lee called for updates from Councilmembers.

Councilmember Burgis provided an update on the Delta Protection Commission's efforts to recruit a new Executive Director and discussed a presentation on agricultural land conversion at the most recent DPC meeting.

Chair Lee asked for public comment.

There was no public comment in Sacramento or Eureka.

The agenda item is viewable on the linked agenda at <https://bit.ly/3HLo88r>, minute 01:16:46.

## **9. EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT (INFORMATION ITEM)**

Executive Officer Jessica Pearson highlighted July as Disability Pride Month, celebrating the diversity and contributions of individuals with disabilities. She also announced the successful relaunch of the Disability Advisory Committee (DAC), emphasizing its role in fostering an inclusive environment.

Pearson reported that no new certifications of consistency had been filed since the last meeting and urged stakeholders to stay informed via notifications and the website. She also mentioned a comment letter sent to the Bureau of Reclamation on the Delta Cross Channel Gate Improvements Project, which aims to enhance salmon migration, water quality, and recreation.

She welcomed new Council staff: Madhu Pokharel, a budget specialist with more than 14 years of experience, and Dr. Hollis Jones, who was promoted to senior environmental scientist, contributing valuable expertise in environmental and water issues. Lastly, Pearson announced that the Council's unanimous approval of the Delta Adapts Climate Adaptation Plan at the June Council meeting was shared across multiple news platforms before passing the agenda item to Executive Fellow Audrey Cho and McCarthy Fellow Jayden Joeckel for their presentation.

### **a. Legal Update**

There was no legal update.

### **b. Legislative Update**

Cho and Joeckel provided updates on legislation, including SB 650 (Cabaldon D), a proposed amendment to the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Reform Act of 2009, Assemblymember Heath Flora's election as minority leader, and a state budget update. Governor Newsom signed the 2025 Budget Act, addressing a \$11.8 billion deficit. Recent laws AB 130 and SB 131, related to CEQA, are effective immediately.

Allocations for Proposition 4 are upcoming, but the impact of federal spending cuts in the One Big Beautiful Bill Act is not yet reflected.

They concluded with an update on the Federal Budget, including the signing of the One Big Beautiful Bill Act on July 4th, tracking of federal agency requests (NOAA, USGS, USBR, Army Corps, EPA), oversight of House and Senate Appropriations bills, and news that the EPA is closing its Office of Research and Development.

Chair Lee asked for public comment.

There was no public comment in Sacramento or Eureka.

The agenda item is viewable on the linked agenda at <https://bit.ly/3HLo88r>, minute 01:18:15.

#### **10. LEAD SCIENTIST REPORT (INFORMATION ITEM)**

Dr. Windham-Myers began with an overview of the highlighted article this month.

*Measuring water levels in wetlands using new satellite data* Kica, S., Pavelsky, T. M., Fayne, J. V., & Williams, B. A. (2025). SWOT Water Surface Elevation in Herbaceous Wetlands of Florida's Everglades. *Geophysical Research Letters*, 52(9), e2025GL114956. <https://doi.org/10.1029/2025GL114956>

Scientists are increasingly using different types of imagery from satellites (a type of remote sensing) to do things like calculate river flow and track ground subsidence, groundwater loss, and relative changes in water levels. In this article, Kica et al. (2025) investigate potential uses for data from the Surface Water and Ocean Topography (SWOT) satellite. This satellite mission was developed by NASA and the Centre National D'Etudes Spatiales (CNES, the French national space agency) in collaboration with the Canadian and UK space agencies. The mission was launched in 2022 with the aim of measuring Earth's surface waters using a special type of radar instrumentation.

The researchers show that SWOT can successfully and accurately map water levels and the extent of water inundation in certain Florida wetlands, within 3 inches.

Burgis and Dr. Windham-Myers clarified the centimeter to inches conversion and the accuracy of the data.



Like the San Francisco Bay-Delta system, the Florida Everglades were historically expansive wetlands that have been substantially altered for agricultural use and other development. Both ecosystems have also been highly modified to facilitate water supply. As such, SWOT's demonstrated utility in the Everglades is relevant to wetlands in the Bay-Delta, especially in terms of restoration and hydrological monitoring. Dr. Windham-Myers walked through an image of what a snapshot of this data might look like for the Delta.

Burgis and Dr. Windham-Myers discussed the geography and water levels of the Delta.

Dr. Windham-Myers highlighted a recently published "Changing Paradigms of Knowledge Production: Interweaving Traditional Knowledge and Predominant Science in the Delta." An article in which Dr. Xoco Shinbrot and colleagues within and outside the Council explored approaches to interweaving knowledge systems, where to find interweaving opportunities, and the governance structures that may support this.

Lee, Pearson, and Dr. Windham-Myers discussed where to find the article online ([https://escholarship.org/uc/jmie\\_sfews](https://escholarship.org/uc/jmie_sfews)).

Dr. Windham-Myers highlighted Delta Science Program recently announced \$5.9 million in awards to fund eight critical scientific studies in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta and Suisun Marsh. Dr. Windham-Myers highlighted upcoming events and projects including a new Delta topographic data updated using LiDAR.

Burgis and Dr. Windham-Myers discussed the accuracy of the topographic map. Other upcoming projects highlighted included the Delta ISB's emerging research climate symposium on September 16-17, and the release of final 2025 State of Bay-Delta Science articles.

Dr. Windham-Myers closed with a review of the "By the Numbers" report.

Hueso, Burgis, Pearson, and Dr. Windham-Myers discussed the San Luis river, water storage and management in Northern California.

Chair Lee asked for public comment.

There was no public comment in Sacramento or Eureka.

The item is viewable on the linked agenda <https://bit.ly/3HLo88r>, minute 01:29:59.

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

The next Council meeting will take place on August 28, 2025. Please refer to the posted meeting notice 10 days before the meeting for further information or updates.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:37 a.m.

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