

**Southwestern Water Conservation District  
Board of Directors Special Meeting via Zoom  
February 3, 2022**

**Present:** Dagan Chadd JR Ford David Guilliams  
Rusty Hinger Amy Huff Jenny Russell  
Don Schwindt

**Absent:** Monte Naslund Charlie Smith

**Staff:** Laura Spann, Programs Coordinator  
Steve Wolff, General Manager

**Consultants:** Carrie Padgett, Harris Water Engineering  
Garin Vorthmann, Colorado Legislative Strategies  
Beth Van Vurst, Van Vurst Law, General Counsel

**Guests:** Orla Bannan, Western Resource Advocates  
Ken Curtis, Dolores Water Conservancy District  
John Cyran, Western Resource Advocates  
Jonathan Romeo, Durango Telegraph

**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: 00:05:00)*

There was unanimous consent to approve the agenda.

**3.0 Questions & Comments from the Public**

*(time: 00:01:00)*

There were no questions or comments from the public.

**4.0 State Legislative Update & SWCD Position on Bills**

*(time: 00:01:15)*

Garin Vorthmann and Steve Wolff summarized SB22-028 (Groundwater Compact Compliance Fund), which creates the groundwater compact compliance and sustainability fund to help finance groundwater use reduction efforts in the Rio Grande river basin and the Republican river basin, such as efforts to buy and retire irrigation wells and irrigated acreage in the river basins. Steve and Garin recommended that SWCD support the bill and the concept of state financial support in addressing compact compliance. Don Schwindt moved that SWCD support SB22-028 (Groundwater Compact Compliance Fund). Amy Huff seconded. There was board discussion. The motion passed.

Steve, Garin, and Beth Van Vurst summarized several draft bills under discussion (not yet introduced), specifically a bill addressing administration of fire suppression ponds in existence prior to 1975, a bill incentivizing turf removal by providing matching funds for existing community turf programs and establishing a statewide turf removal program, and a bill allowing public employees to join a union and engage in collective bargaining. SWCD and Colorado Water Congress are continuing to monitor the four introduced bills that came from interim work of the Wildfire Matters Review Committee. John Cyran, Western Resource Advocates, presented the draft legislation that would permit the designation of recreational in-channel values reaches (RIVR) of up to 400 yards per segment to protect recreation uses across the state. This proposed legislation would allow water rights to be leased, loaned, or purchased to deliver to that reach. There was board discussion and comments.

- Garin, Beth, and Steve summarized the following proposed legislation:
- HB22-1097 (Dissolution of Special Districts) would authorize counties to file an application for dissolution of a special district within their boundaries.
  - HB22-1092 (Loans from Irrigation Districts to Landowners) would permit a board of directors of an Irrigation District to borrow money, which may then be loaned to landowners within their boundaries for various water-related improvement projects.
  - SB22-013 (Boards and Commissions) would address the procedures for certain boards and commissions to adjust representation based on the updated state and Congressional redistricting maps as applicable, with a few sections that are applicable to SWCD. There was board discussion about the need for an SWCD written policy to address remote board meeting participation.
  - SB22-029 (Investment Water Speculation) would prohibit a purchaser of agricultural water rights that are represented by shares in a mutual ditch company from engaging in "investment water speculation" and provides a mechanism for investigation and enforcement by the State Engineer. There was board consensus to begin development of an SWCD policy recommendation regarding investment water speculation at the April or June board meeting.
  - SB22-030 (Expand Water Resources Review Committee) would change the name of the water resources review committee to the water resources and agriculture review committee (committee) and expand the scope of the committee to include agricultural issues.

## 5.0 Adjournment

President Russell adjourned the meeting at 12:50 p.m.

  
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Jenny Russell, President