

**Southwestern Water Conservation District  
Board of Directors Special Meeting via Zoom  
January 20, 2022**

**Present:** JR Ford David Guilliams Rusty Hinger  
Amy Huff Jenny Russell Charlie Smith

**Absent:** Dagan Chadd Monte Naslund Don Schwindt

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

**Consultants:** Garin Vorthmann, Colorado Legislative Strategies  
Beth Van Vurst, Van Vurst Law, General Counsel

**Guests:** Orla Bannan, Western Resources Advocates  
Ken Curtis, Dolores Water Conservancy District  
Marcel Gaztambide, San Juan Citizens Alliance  
Roger Rash, Montrose County Commissioner  
Chris Treese, Public

**1.0 Call to Order – Roll Call and Verification of Quorum**

President Jenny Russell called the meeting to order at 12:01 p.m. Roll was taken and a quorum established.

**2.0 Review and Approve Agenda**

*(time: 00:01:00)*

There was unanimous consent to approve the agenda.

**3.0 Questions & Comments from the Public**

*(time: 00:01:15)*

There were no questions or comments from the public.

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

*(time: 00:01:30)*

Garin Vorthmann, Colorado Legislative Strategies, and Steve Wolff summarized the following legislation proposed by the Interim Water Resources Review Committee: 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; SB22-029 (Investment Water Speculation), which prohibits 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, and SB22-030 (Expand Water Resources Review Committee to Include Agriculture), the bill changes the name of the water resources review committee to the water resources and agriculture review committee (committee) and expands the scope of the committee to include agricultural issues.

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. SJR22-002 (Water Projects Eligibility List) provides the required approval of the projects eligibility lists for the Colorado Water Resources & Power Development Authority, several of which are within the District. Charlie Smith moved that SWCD support SJR22-002 (Water Projects Eligibility List). Rusty Hinger seconded. The motion passed.

Garin Vorthmann summarized four proposed wildfire mitigation bills developed by the Wildfire Matters Review Committee to establish various grant programs to disburse funding to support mitigation efforts and support

educational outreach. There was SWCD board consensus to continue monitoring forest health and wildfire legislation.

Currently, the Colorado General Assembly is conducting SMART act hearings on the status of various state programs. Once those have concluded, most proposed water bills are expected to be calendared for consideration.

Other expected proposed legislation may seek to establish "recreational in-channel values reaches", which would establish a process to protect recreational flows through naturally occurring stream segments. Colorado Counties, Inc. is also discussing proposed legislation to support the continued existence of certain fire suppression ponds that operate without a decreed water right or replacement plan.

## **5.0 Adjournment**

President Russell adjourned the meeting at 12:45 p.m.

  
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Jenny Russell, President