



**QUANTIFICATION SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT
JOINT POWERS AUTHORITY
VIRTUAL MEETING MINUTES
June 13, 2025, at 1:30 p.m.**

Commissioners and Alternates present:

Tonya Marshall, California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) – Chair
Tina Shields, Imperial Irrigation District (IID) – Commissioner
Robert Cheng, Coachella Valley Water District (CVWD) – Alternate Commissioner
Alexi Schnell, San Diego County Water Authority (SDCWA) – Alternate Commissioner

QSA JPA staff present:

Jeff Ferre, Best, Best, and Krieger – Legal Counsel
Alexi Schnell, SDCWA – Chief Administrative Officer

Others present:

Jessica Schroeder, CDFW	Wendy Joplin, SDCWA
Joanna Hoff, IID	Alan Okewole, SDCWA
Jessica Humes, IID	Marilen Santos, SDCWA
Michael Cohen, Pacific Institute	Darren Simon, SDCWA
Deborah Hodgins, SDCWA	Chris Woidzik, SDCWA

PRELIMINARY MATTERS

1. Call to Order
Chair Marshall called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.
2. Roll Call
There was a quorum of the Commission present at the time of the meeting.
3. Public Comment
There were no public comments at that time.

ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

4. Action: Approve minutes of regular QSA JPA meeting held April 2, 2025 (Alexi Schnell, SDCWA)
Alternate Commissioner Cheng made a motion to approve the minutes, which was seconded by Commissioner Shields. The minutes were approved unanimously by a roll call vote.

FINANCIAL MATTERS

5. Information: Treasurer's Report ending March 31, 2025 (Alan Okewole, SDCWA)
Mr. Okewole provided a review of the Treasurer's Report ending March 31. The quarter ended with \$72.7 million in cash and investments. Approximately \$58.6 million of that amount was managed by Chandler Asset Management. The effective rate of return for the portfolio was reported at 3.8%, and the interest received (fiscal year (FY) to date) was \$2.07 million. Two invoices were paid, totaling approximately \$3.1 million.

6. Information: Finance Report ending March 31, 2025 (Chris Woidzik, SDCWA)

Mr. Woidzik provided a review of the Financial Report ending March 31. Total assets were \$74.0 million, with \$899,748 in liabilities. The total unassigned fund balance was \$73.1 million. The total revenues were \$3.36 million, and total expenditures were \$6.3 million. Approximately 43% of the FY 2025 budget was spent through this period. Mr. Woidzik concluded with a summary of the three highest expenditures (Tasks 2, 8, and 24) as detailed in the Budget Status Report.

7. Action: Review and consider approval of QSA JPA Fiscal Year 2026 Budget and Work Plan (Alexi Schnell, SDCWA and Jessica Humes, IID)

Alternate Commissioner Schnell stated that the proposed budget was \$18,668,078 and reviewed tables from the budget document, which included FY 2025 expenditures, FY 2025 projected fund balance, projected FY 2026 projected fund balance, and FY 2026 major expenditures (top three tasks). She also reviewed the projected QSA JPA cash flow as of June 2025. Ms. Humes reviewed the mitigation tasks with larger expenditures budgeted (Task 2, Task 8, and Task 24). Alternate Commissioner Schnell reviewed the budget appendices and concluded by requesting the Commission's approval of the recommendation to approve the FY 2026 budget of \$18,668,078.

Alternate Commissioner Cheng inquired how does IID measure success of the various dust mitigation measures implemented at the Salton Sea and what percentage of these measures are targeting the most emissive areas. Alternate Commissioner Cheng further inquired if IID has been able to comply with the air quality standards applicable to the Salton Sea through implementation of dust mitigation measures.

Ms. Humes responded that projects are monitored extensively through a combination of Cox Sand Catches, air quality stations, and mobile meteorological stations. Monitoring data is collected and used annually to guide augmentation of dust mitigation measures as needed. IID's goal is to have each dust mitigation measure reach at least 80% control for efficiency. As for targeting the emissive areas, Ms. Humes noted that IID prioritizes projects that cover the approximately 30% of exposed playa that accounts for about 90% of the emissions near the Salton Sea. IID is also coordinating with the state to identify these highly emissive areas so that state projects are prioritized for these areas. Lastly, Ms. Humes added that the air quality program is designed to be proactive in addressing emissions and noted that program to date has been successful in its approach but there is still a lot of work needed at the sea.

Commissioner Shields also noted that the annual emissions estimates report and proactive dust control plan will go to the IID board for approval in June. Once approved, these documents will be posted on the JPA website. As for compliance with air quality standards, Commissioner Shields added that the goal is to avoid the issuance of notice of violation from a regulatory body that would likely require expensive best available control measures (BACM) projects instead of the cost-effective projects implemented by the JPA to date to remedy the air quality standard violation, hence the proactive approach. At this time, there is no governing standard that these projects must meet, rather the goal is to prevent air quality issues from getting worse and requiring regulatory intervention.

Michael Cohen (Pacific Institute) noted a conflict between the Red Hill Bay BACM project and the Lithium Valley Specific Plan and inquired if there are any offramps for the Red Hill Bay BACM project if Lithium Valley projects move forward on this site. Commissioner Shields responded that IID staff are aware of the conflict and have shared this information with Imperial County and the Imperial County Air Pollution Control District (ICAPCD). The ICAPCD has responded that the stipulated order for abatement controls the development of the site, which means that IID must continue with construction of the Red Hill Bay BACM project despite the conflict.

Commissioner Shields made a motion to approve the recommendation to approve the FY 2026 budget of \$18,668,078, which was seconded by Chair Marshall. The item was approved unanimously by a roll call vote.

IMPLEMENTATION

8. Information: Status report on implementation of mitigation measures (Jessica Humes, IID)

Ms. Humes provided an update on various mitigation measures:

Task 2 – QSA Implementation Team Biologists: IID reported that it is fully staffed.

Task 8 – Drain Habitat (Aquatic) – “Managed Marsh” Areas: IID reported ongoing operation and maintenance activities. Increasing temperatures are causing evaporation losses at the various ponds. More water is being applied to offset the losses. IID crews also cleaned out outlets that had become clogged with vegetation. Annual marsh bird surveys and selenium sampling are complete.

Task 15 – Pre-Construction Activity Burrowing Owl Surveys and Relocation: IID reported ongoing inspections for burrowing owl activity for all water department activities and construction projects. Annual burrowing owl training for IID operations staff is nearly complete.

Task 17 – Farmer and Public Education Program: IID received its latest student-designed advertisements from *Imperial Valley Alive!* magazine as part of IID’s Kid Wise Burrowing Owl Education Program.

Task 24 – Salton Sea Air Quality: IID reported that construction of the Clubhouse Vegetation Project is complete as they move into the project closure phase. Irrigation of the site started in late April and IID has recently observed germination on almost all of its vegetation blocks. Some additional seeding was needed in a few areas. Crews are also making repairs to damaged irrigation lines caused by coyotes biting the lines. The Bombay Beach Vegetation Project is in final design and a solicitation packet is being prepared. IID is still waiting for a permit from Imperial County to operate wells on the site. IID is implementing air quality monitoring at all project sites, and its annual emissions monitoring report and proactive dust control plan are going to the IID board for approval in June.

9. Information: Update on State Salton Sea Management Program (Alexi Schnell, SDCWA)

Alternate Commissioner Schnell provided the following SSMP Update to the Commission:

SCH East Pond Expansion: On May 22, the state held an event at its Species Conservation Habitat (SCH) project at the Salton Sea to commemorate a milestone, the flooding of its East Pond Expansion, which will cover approximately 2,000 acres and a three-mile stretch of land. The East Pond Expansion, funded through the Inflation Reduction Act, is part of an expansion that will ultimately double the size of the SCH to 9,000 acres. The event was attended by CNRA Secretary Wade Crowfoot as well as other state, tribal and local leaders. The SCH event was held a day after the State Water Resources Control Board held its annual workshop to receive an update on the SSMP based on the release of the state’s annual SSMP report. The water board was supportive of the state’s momentum. The state’s annual report also references the separate but complementary efforts of the QSA JPA.

10. Adjournment

Before the meeting was adjourned, Alternate Commissioner Schnell informed meeting attendees that QSA JPA staff are exploring tentative dates for the FY 2026 quarterly meetings, with the next meeting date in late October to accommodate the FY 2025 audit. Staff will send out a poll for availability for each of the four meetings.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:21 p.m.