

Tulare Lake Basin Disadvantaged Community Water Study

Stakeholder Oversight Advisory Committee

4:30 PM on Monday, February 6, 2012

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS CONFERENCE ROOMS A&B
ADMINISTRATION BUILDING
2800 W. BURREL AVE.
VISALIA, CALIFORNIA 93291

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

At this time, members of the public may comment on any item not appearing on the agenda. Under state law, matters presented under this item cannot be discussed or acted upon by the Tulare Lake Basin Disadvantaged Community Water Study Stakeholder Oversight Advisory Committee at this time. For items appearing on the agenda, the public is invited to make comments at the time the item comes up for the Tulare Lake Basin Disadvantaged Community Water Study Stakeholder Oversight Advisory Committee's consideration. Any person addressing the Tulare Lake Basin Disadvantaged Community Water Study Stakeholder Oversight Advisory Committee will be limited to a maximum of three (3) minutes so that all interested parties have an opportunity to speak. At all times, please state your name and address for the record.

AGENDA

1. Call to Order
2. Additions/ Deletions from Agenda
3. Public Comments
4. Approval of Minutes from the December 5, 2011 and January 9, 2012
5. Summarize Goals of this Meeting (CWC)
6. Recap Priority Issues
7. Potential Solutions Breakout Session

BREAK

8. Scoring Criteria Breakout Session
9. Administrative Matters
10. Committee Comments
11. Meetings
 - a. Cancellation of Monday, March 5, 2012 meeting
 - b. Establishment of Monday, April 2, 2012 meeting
 - c. Discussion of possible Monday, May 7, 2012 meeting

Stakeholder Oversight Advisory Committee Contact:
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As a courtesy to those in attendance, please turn off or place in alert mode all cell phones and pagers.

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, if you need special assistance to participate in this meeting, please contact the Clerk of the Board's Office at (559) 636-5000

Examples of Potential Solutions

(H./I.) Lack of Funding to offset increasingly expensive operations and maintenance costs in large part to lack of economies of scale

1. Consolidation projects (both physical, managerial, and/or governance).
2. Large-scale regional program:
 - a. Many systems, maybe county-wide;
 - b. Has skilled staff to do O& M;
 - c. Doesn't have to be physically connected, but could be; and/or
 - d. Could look at different models-JPA private, etc.

(C.) Poor Water Quality

1. Point of Entry, Point of Use, or bottled water fill station for interim or very small systems; and/or
2. Evaluation of potential alternative solutions for Nitrogen M.C.L. compliance based on geographic available supply and operations issues.

(B.) Inadequate or Unaffordable funding or funding constraints to make improvements

1. Develop ways to self-sustain and generate funding locally.
 - a. Have to think of ways to redefine what is "local" to include larger area; and/or
 - b. Look at different costs for outside areas, incorporation, etc.

Pilot Project / Study Evaluation Criteria

Draft Threshold Eligibility Guidelines

1. Community Support/ *Apoyo de la Comunidad*
 - *The Project/Study will be developed with the involvement and support of the communities involved (both local residents and local agencies)*
2. Solves Challenges/Problems/ *Resuelve retos y problemas*
 - *The Project/Study develops a solution to a priority issue.*
3. Replicable/ *Replicable*
 - *The Project/Study applies to multiple communities.*
4. Affordable/ *Economico*
 - *This Project/Study would result in affordable rates for local residents.*
5. Sustainable/ *Sostenible*
 - *This Project/Study would develop a solution that could be sustained over the long-term.*
6. Governance/ *Gobernanza*
 - *This Project/Study involves or develops providers that are transparent and accountable and have technical, managerial and financial capacity.*
7. Time Frame/ *Marco de tiempo*
 - *This Project/Study can be completed within the budget and available time-period.*

Examples of Prioritization Evaluation Criteria

1. Number of “priority issues it addresses”
2. Number of DAC communities this Project/Study would serve
3. Geographic equity
4. Size / type of community equity
 - a. *The Project/Study works for both large and small communities.*
 - b. *This Project/Study would work for DAC communities in different settings (e.g. isolated, near other communities, outside a city, etc.)*
5. Community need
 - a. *This Project/Study would address an acute water quality problem.*
 - b. *This Project/Study would solve a community’s needs (i.e. mean a community has fully solved its problems).*
 - c. *This Project/Study would result in a solution that will not be done any other way.*
6. Innovative model solution
 - a. *This Project/Study would create a new, innovative model that could be replicated throughout the region.*

Tulare Lake Basin Disadvantaged Community Water Study

Stakeholder Oversight Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes

December 5, 2011

1. **Call to Order**

Chairman Allen Ishida called the meeting to order.

2. **Additions/ Deletions from Agenda**

There were no additions or deletions to the agenda

3. **Public Comments**

There were no public comments

4. **Roll Call of Voting Members**

Denise Akins, County of Tulare, reviewed ground rules and logistics. She announced that simultaneous translation was being conducted and asked people to speak slowly. Participants were asked to verify their contact information and indicate whether or not the information could be shared amongst Committee members. She announced that mileage claims would be collected.

Ms. Akins took roll of committee members and indicated which members would be participating in voting.

5. **Approve Minutes from October 24, 2011 Meeting**

Chairman Ishida asked for corrections or additions to the minutes from the last meeting. A motion was made by Eugene Patterson and seconded by name. The motion passed unanimously.

6. **Goals**

Chairman Ishida acknowledged participants Dennis Keller, Carl Longley, Susana de Anda and Laurel Firestone for their commitment to the disadvantaged community project for the past 5 years. He said the timing was right because state agencies seemed to be moving in the direction of finding solutions. He emphasized that the region needs long term solutions, and must be positioned to take advantage of funding opportunities when they become available.

Ms. Firestone, Community Water Center, gave an overview of the Tulare Lake Basin Disadvantaged Community Water Study. She explained that many people do not have safe drinking water. She gave examples of schools, families, and communities that are affected by the lack of safe and affordable drinking water. She went on to say that economic development is hindered due to the lack of safe water. She explained that during the meeting the group would break into workgroups to discuss challenges and potential solutions.

Ms. Firestone stated that long term sustainable solutions that take into consideration small disadvantaged communities are necessary. She explained that the purpose of the project was to develop regional, shared solutions for the Central Valley's water and waste water issues.

Ms. Firestone explained that the purpose of the project is to identify and analyze community needs and develop potential joint solutions. She clarified that the project aims to ensure disadvantaged communities are able to attract funding for long-term solutions, and to better integrate their water and wastewater needs into local planning processes. She also explained the importance of identifying barriers to implementation of shared solutions, and to build momentum to make solutions happen.

Ms. Firestone stated that the group would work during the night's meeting to identify priority needs and review data and maps. She stated that the next two meetings in January and February would be slated for developing criteria for project evaluation and to identify potential projects and studies.

Participants were advised that they would be given homework to start thinking about projects the study would fund and to begin thinking about ways of evaluating projects to determine the best examples of innovative solutions. Ms. Firestone stressed the importance of gathering information for the database and not just to fund the pilot projects. She also emphasized the importance of having the chance to develop new models for regional and shared solutions. She advised participants to not fall into the trap of thinking about the process as a competition.

Chairman Ishida brought awareness to the diversity of those in attendance. He stated that there are representatives from 4 counties and also Senator Dianne Feinstein's office. He emphasized that the blend of non-profits, elected and community members working towards a common goal is unique.

7. Definition of DAC and what it means for this Project

Ms. Firestone defined disadvantaged communities for the purpose of the SOAC process as: 1.) Less than 80% of state median household income; 2.) Communities of 15 or more homes or businesses or 25 people year round (including schools); and 3) unincorporated.

Ms. Firestone explained that this process is an opportunity to give attention to the types of communities that have been left out of the process in the past. She said that while disadvantaged communities are the focus of the process, it is not meant to exclude cities. It is simply that those jurisdictions need help, in part because there is a lack of technical staff to help them devise solutions.

8. Database Summary Presentation

John Dutton of Provost & Pritchard gave participants an overview of maps that are under development for the project. Gavin O'leary, Provost & Pritchard, announced that in addition to widely available data, such as census data, the study included partners that provided data that would be incorporated into the maps. He explained that the maps indicate where services exist and water quality issues were also captured on the maps. He stated that the project team used current information on water quality, such as nitrate contamination. Mr. O'leary presented a water quality map that included nitrate contamination as well arsenic, uranium, and DBCP concentrations. He clarified that the map did not delineate whether the selected wells were public or agricultural supply wells.

9. Identify Areas of Database that Committee May Have Information

Mr. Dutton announced that Provost & Pritchard is working with the State Water Board to determine where there are wastewater violations. He announced that the group would be

moving into breakout groups to identify what data is missing and what kind of projects would address the issues indicated on the maps.

Ms. Firestone announced that the group would number off and come back after the break into their groups. The group numbered off into 7 groups and then dispersed for a break before returning to the breakout sessions.

10. Workgroups to Discuss Tulare Lake Basin Disadvantaged Community Water and Wastewater Challenges and Priorities

All attendees participated in workgroups. The groups recorded their opinions then reported back to the larger group.

Karen McBride reported from Group 7. She said that the top challenges were lack of funding for solving problems and that regulatory requirements pose a burden to communities. She explained that when a crises solution is enacted to bring a community into compliance it can be expensive. She went on to say that technical know-how and lack of knowledge of options is an obstacle and that there is also a lack of people in the communities who are willing to step up and serve.

Chuck Lackey reported from Group 6 and said the problem is a lack of funding to help small communities get design funds and move towards solutions. He reported that there is a need for educating communities on the importance of water quality and getting community buy-in is important, but difficult to achieve. He also indicated that Prop 218 poses a lot of challenges because a majority or 2/3 vote is necessary to move forward to locally fund solutions. He stated that getting community buy-in for the long term operation and maintenance costs is also difficult. His group also stated that it is hard to get certified operators for the systems and many systems do not have full time operators because they are small and cannot afford it.

Sue Ruiz reported for Group 5. She said that educating people, working as a volunteer service district, and educating public officials are all challenges. She went on to say that getting the attention of State and local agencies is difficult because they are not always responsive to the people. Additionally, Group 5 felt the lack of funding is a big obstacle.

Kara Brodfuehrer reported from Group 4 that there is a lack of capacity on local community service district boards and that they lack the ability to identify solutions. She stated that they lack an understanding of how to come up with regional solutions. She also listed the lack of financial resources as an obstacle.

Tricia Wathen reported from Group 3. She stated that contaminants such as nitrate, arsenic and benzene burden the region and impact the health of the population. She stated that the lack of management capacity and the inability to educate and/or train the board members is a barrier. She went on to report that the costs of financing treatment systems as well as operation and maintenance is a problem. She also said that there is a distrust between jurisdictions that discourages consolidation.

Karl Longley reported from Group 2 that the problems were surprisingly common among the participants. He mentioned the importance of accountability in governance and indicated that officials in County and State government do not make DACs a priority. He indicated that major barriers are the inability to have trained operators and to attain the funding necessary to solve problems.

Kathy Wood reported from Group 1. She said a big challenge was self-governance versus consolidation. She raised the question of whether there was a public health benefit achieved by making MCL standards more stringent.

Ms. Firestone asked participants to keep in mind the issues raised as they evaluate potential pilot projects that address the region's priority challenges.

11. Imagining Pilot Projects and Studies

Ms. Firestone defined pilot projects as "new models for shared solutions" and said each one would have diverse stakeholder input.

Ms. Firestone presented the New Mexico model for pilot projects and asked everyone to consider what sorts of pilot projects would provide innovative solutions. She explained that in New Mexico, the State funded regional consolidation projects and discovered that consolidation of many small communities provided solutions to problems like aging systems and contamination issues.

She provided the example of 7 small systems in need of infrastructure replacements. She reported that efforts by County officials led them to consider consolidation because they had similar problems and individualized treatment was becoming unaffordable. She stated that they had a number of challenges and concerns including inequality of size, however, once consolidated they were able to solve their problems and come into compliance with State and Federal regulations and develop affordable solutions and were not reliant on volunteers.

Chris Kapheim of Alta Irrigation District (AID) reported on community solutions in the region. He reported that AID looked at nitrate and DPCP contamination. He stated they looked at these issues and long term goals to developed a long term plan that would address the water supply need. He reported that currently, AID is looking at a feasibility study for a regional surface water treatment plant that would blend many sources and result in a potable water supply. Mr. Kapheim said they were making progress but progress was slow for many of the reasons identified in the breakout session.

Paul Boyer spoke about Alpaugh. He informed the group that Alpaugh has water that is high in nitrate, smells bad, and has arsenic. He reported that a few years ago the community drilled a new well, which was not easy to do. He stated that the community has applied for Prop 84 funds to evaluate their options. He reported that the community pays an average of \$65 per month for water, but the cost will go up when arsenic treatment is added. Ms. Wathen discussed the challenges faced by Alpaugh and finding a solution.

A representative from Kings County said he was working in Alpaugh in 2003 while serving on staff for Assembly member Nicole Para. He said that the community still does not have water that meets the state health standards, and that this is typical of the region.

Dr. Longley said that in the Dakotas they have been able to access federal funding through the Bureau of Reclamation to pipe water long distances. Dr. Longley said that it will take planning, but investing in California's water infrastructure is key. He said it will help our local economy, because water means jobs.

Ms. Firestone wrapped up the meeting by asking participants to think about potential pilot projects. She presented potential scoring criteria to the group.

12. Presentation of Draft Scoring Criteria

Dawn Marple of Provost & Pritchard advised participants that they would need to be able to evaluate pilot projects by some criteria that can be quantified. She said that the consultants would come up with questions that are more technical, but that the participants needed to contribute information on how to evaluate whether a project would be supported.

Ms. Firestone advised the group to consider obstacles like the cost of operation and maintenance when evaluating pilot projects.

Participants were provide with a handout listing one potential criteria. They were asked to brainstorm additional criteria to provide to the project team.

13. Next Committee Meeting

Ms. Firestone announced that the next meeting would be held on Monday, January 9, 2012 at 5:00 PM.

Richard Valle from Kings County suggested supporting Dr. Longley's application to the State Water Board because of his support for DACs.

Tulare Lake Basin Disadvantaged Community Water Study

Stakeholder Oversight Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes **January 9, 2012**

1. Call to Order

Vice Chairman Richard Valle called the meeting to order.

2. Additions/ Deletions from Agenda

The minutes from the December 5, 2011 meeting were not available for review and therefore item number 4 was deleted from the agenda. The balance of the agenda was approved by the committee.

3. Public Comments

There was no public comment.

4. Summarize Goals of this Meeting

Ms. Firestone informed the group that the goal of the meeting was to prioritize water issues and related projects. She displayed a flow chart of the processes which was also provided to the participants as a handout. She stated that the SOAC needed to finalize a list of common problems, then come to agreement on the list. She further explained that the group would then narrow that list into priority issues.

Ms. Firestone explained that the project team will present a wide array of potential solutions that address those priority issues at the next meeting. She went on to say that those will be developed by the project team into potential pilot projects. She indicated that the SOAC will select pilot projects based on the priority issues and using scoring criteria that will be developed. She explained that all of this will be accomplished by April, 2012.

Ms. Firestone reported that much work was being conducted on the development of the database. She explained that there were various permissions from several entities to share data, which took time to obtain. She also asked for volunteers to participate in a subcommittee to contribute to the development of the database on various subjects, such as water rates. She circulated a sign-up sheet.

5. Finalize List of Common Problems Identified in Breakout Sessions

All attendees were given a handout with the question: "What are the biggest problems you think are facing communities in this region related to drinking water and wastewater?" Participants were given an opportunity to contemplate the question and provide their feedback. Ms. Firestone advised participants when the time was up, and explained that all of the problems mentioned at the previous meeting had been recorded. She explained that the information had been consolidated into a spreadsheet.

Ms. Firestone explained that the project team had grouped, by category, all of the identified problems in an effort to make them easier to understand. She explained that later in the meeting, the SOAC would vote on whether the list was appropriate, accurate, and complete. She explained the draft list would be revised to reflect the consensus of the group.

Ms. Firestone asked participants to make notes as she went through the list. She indicated the categories were as follows:

- A. Inadequate Existing Infrastructure
- B. Inadequate Funding to Make Improvements
- C. Poor Water Quality
- D. Lack of Affordable Interim Solutions
- E. Insufficient Quantity of Water
- F. A Changing Regulatory Environment
- G. Inability to Address the Source of Pollution
- H. Lack of Economies of Scale for Sustainable Operations and Maintenance:
- I. Lack of Funding to Offset Increasingly Expensive Operations and Maintenance Costs
- J. Lack of Technical, Managerial and Financial (TMF) Capacity by Water and Wastewater Providers
- K. Inadequate Accountability to DAC Residents by Water or Wastewater Providers
- L. Resistance to Change by Existing Institutions
- M. Lack of Informed, Empowered, or Engaged Residents
- N. Lack of Political Will to Solve Water & Wastewater Challenges in DACs
- O. Segregated Community Development
- P. Lack of Information on DACs
- Q. Lack of Vision and Integrated Planning to Develop Sustainable Solutions

Dr. Longley mentioned that another problem was that lack of water and wastewater infrastructure data in GIS format.

Ms. Firestone asked the group if there were any common problems that did not seem appropriate or that were missing. She asked the group to look back at their list of problems from the beginning exercise and suggest anything that was missing. Groundwater storage was added to Item E- Insufficient Quantity of Water

Juventino Gonzales Rodriguez said that everything on the list was accurate. He added that he would like to add proper management of systems from local water boards. He invited everyone to visit his community.

Supervisor Judy Case said that the term "good water" should be defined. She said that if the Committee was going to make statements about 'good water' then the term should be defined. Ms. Firestone asked if the group could use the Safe Drinking Water Act guidelines as the definition for "good water". Dr. Longley

agreed that there was a need to define what safe water is for the purpose of the study.

Ms. Firestone asked the group if they could agree to keep water quality on this list, and define the goal in the larger study. Julie Allen asked why the group would not accept the EPA's definition of water quality issues.

Mike Hickey said GIS data available online should be added to 'Lack of Information' and that it is a lack of institutional capacity. Kara Brodfuehrer suggested that Lack of Oversight should be added and Ms. Firestone suggested that it should be added to Lack of Planning. Another participant said surface water supply should be added. Walter Ramirez suggested that inadequate/confusing information on notices should be added to political will. Joe Prado suggested that political will be changed to public support or political will. Mike Carnes suggested that "inability to attain funding" and "fund ongoing O & M" was really one issue. The Committee agreed to combine Items H and I into one.

One participant said the degree of remoteness of some communities was a barrier to addressing problems. Ms. Allen suggested adding to Item B the capacity to develop grant applications. She explained that a lack of grant writing capacity and lack of ability to pay for grant writers and engineers to do preliminary studies was a barrier to obtaining grants.

Mr. Quevedo suggested adding remoteness as an issue and participants should keep in mind that people in remote areas are taxpayers also and deserve attention in their communities. He stated that sometimes grants are given to communities without residents knowing what is going on.

Denise Kadara said the lack of inclusion of remote communities into planning processes was a problem. She explained that a lot of communities, because they do not have a tax base, get shut out of regional planning efforts.

Ms. Firestone made amendments to the list of common problems per participants' suggestions, which was projected for participants to view. She directed participants' attention to the list and asked if there was anyone who could not support the list. Karen McBride suggested that some communities did not know that there were opportunities to train local people to serve on boards and operate systems so that local control could be maintained and develop local job opportunities.

Mr. Quevedo said that grants were sometimes misallocated because there is no prioritization and that grants are not focused on cleaning up the water which ultimately costs taxpayers.

One participant said that constraints on the eligibility of entities to receive money was a barrier to solving community water problems. Marisela Mares Alatorre

said that the lack of community knowledge of health impacts was a problem because it meant that people did not view solving these issues as a priority.

Ms. Firestone asked for a roll call of the SOAC. Denise Akins of Tulare County did a roll call of the committee members to vote on the final list. Vice Chairman Valle called for a vote. The list was approved as amended.

Ms. Firestone asked the group to count off before a break.

6. Discussion of Priority Issues

Participants broke into 4 working groups to discuss their perceptions of the greatest challenges to water issues in the region. They answered 3 questions:

- A. If one thing could happen as a result of this study that would make you feel it was a success, what would it be?
- B. What can this study do to make the biggest impact towards developing solutions here in the Valley?
- C. If you had to vote on your top 3 priorities from this list of common problems, which would you pick and why?

Ms. Firestone asked the groups to bring their discussions to a close and report back to the larger group.

Mr. Prado reported for Group 1. He stated that the lack of funding for infrastructure, lack of water quality, lack of technical managerial and financial capacity (TMF), lack of economies of scale for operation and maintenance, lack of integrated planning and lack of political will were the group's top priorities.

Sue Ruiz reported Group 2's priorities were: deliver clean water, get a clear vision for how to do that, train providers, narrow focus on how to resolve issues, provide interim solutions, and changing regulations are the primary problems. The highest priorities were educating residents, getting funding, and developing a clear vision.

Group 3 reported that the biggest problem is inadequate funding to make affordable improvements before it is a crisis issue. They also indicated that lack of economy of scale, lack of TMF and local control, and poor water quality also contribute to the problem.

Group 4 reported that focus on water quality was a big issue, political will, and affordability were problems. They indicated that the lack of knowledgeable and empowered people to run the system is an issue, along with lack of good information and good planning.

Ms. Firestone informed participants that each person was provided three colored sticker dots to put under each heading to vote for their 3 highest priorities. Ms.

Firestone clarified that each participant was to vote on three different issues, not the same issue.

Participants circulated and cast their votes for their highest priorities.

Ms. Firestone announced she would tally the votes.

7. Draft Scoring Criteria

Dawn Marple, Provost & Pritchard discussed draft scoring criteria with the group. She mentioned all of the potential pilot projects that the project team presents will be subject to the scoring criteria developed by the group. She presented draft scoring criteria guidelines. She asked the group to take the examples and think about the criteria before the next meeting.

Ms. Marple said that during the next month's meeting the group would have to pin down what scoring criteria would be used and determine how projects would be ranked. She asked participants to take the draft criteria home and submit comments.

8. Finalize Priority List

Ms. Firestone presented the tallied results from the vote:

Physical Infrastructure

A. Inadequate Existing Infrastructure (Ranked 7th):

Infrastructure that is aging, poorly constructed, or of insufficient capacity to meet current or future community needs

B. Inadequate or Unaffordable Funding or Funding Constraints to Make Improvements (ranked 3rd –tie):

Lack of affordable or accessible funding for system improvements; Inadequate funding to make successful grant applications to get infrastructure improvements (i.e. lack of funding for grantwriters, preliminary engineering, etc.); funding isn't always getting to the communities that need it most

Source Water Quality & Quantity

C. Poor Water Quality (Ranked 2nd):

Existing contamination of drinking water source (acute and chronic contaminants), increasing groundwater pollution, new and emerging contaminants, problems with secondary contaminants (i.e. taste, color, smell, etc.), health impacts

D. Lack of Affordable Interim Solutions (Ranked 9th tied):

Residents either face high cost of having to purchase and haul bottled water or other alternative water supplies, and / or face the health impacts of exposure to contaminated water

E. Insufficient Quantity of Water (Ranked 10th tied):

Insufficient supply or lack of reliable water supply, including surface and groundwater, including groundwater storage capacity, surface water storage and supply

F. A Changing Regulatory Environment (Ranked 9th tied):

Changing water quality and water treatment standards, including more stringent requirements as well as new and emerging contaminants

G. Inability to Address the Source of Pollution

Insufficient information on the source of water pollution and inability to address or protect water supply from existing and continuing sources of pollution

Institutional Capacity

H.

I. Inability to Fund Increasingly Expensive Operations and Maintenance Costs Due in Large Part to Lack of Economies of Scale (Ranked #1):

Small systems serving primarily low-income households and remote locations cannot keep rates affordable and still generate enough revenue to run the system safely over the long term; Lack of funding resources to operate and maintain water or wastewater systems at affordable levels and lack of funding for planning and replacement of infrastructure as it ages

J. Lack of Technical, Managerial and Financial (TMF) Capacity by Water and Wastewater Providers (Ranked 4th):

Lack of adequately trained technical, legal, financial, and managerial professionals, as well as inadequate training and ongoing education and assistance for existing water and wastewater providers; complete lack of institutional capacity for areas without a provider; lack of knowledge of available training, assistance, and educational support to support local employment in these sectors

K. Inadequate Accountability to DAC Residents by Water or Wastewater Providers (Ranked 10th):

Water or wastewater providers that are not accountable to residents, such as being unresponsive or failing to communicate information properly

L. Resistance to Change by Existing Institutions:

Resistance to changing an existing institutional structure, both by water and wastewater providers as well as by residents, professional contractors and technical advisors

Empowered Communities

- M. Lack of Informed, Empowered, or Engaged Residents (ranked 3 tied):**
Residents lack good information, or do not feel that they have the power or ability to change their situation, or are not engaged in decision-making processes that impact local water or wastewater service, including inadequate or confusing information about water quality and what is safe drinking water, lack of information to residents on grant opportunities available to the community, knowledge about health impacts
- N. Lack of Public Support or Political Will to Solve Water & Wastewater Challenges in DACs (Ranked 5th):**
Public officials, water policy decision makers, and voters are not prioritizing developing and funding solutions to existing water and wastewater challenges in disadvantaged communities and/or are not responsive or accountable to DAC residents
- O. Segregated Community Development (Ranked 10th):**
Demographically segregated DACs have historically been and continue to be physically and politically separated from larger water and wastewater systems or cities
- P. Lack of Information on DACs (Ranked 8th):**
Lack of information about water rates and usage, lack of information about water quality in areas that have no public water provider (i.e., private wells), barriers to accessing information on water quality (i.e., confidentiality requirements), lack of information about wastewater treatment in areas without wastewater system providers, etc. Lack of data on water and wastewater infrastructure compatible with GIS and online so it can be accessed by the general public
- Q. Lack of Vision and Integrated Planning to Develop Sustainable Solutions (ranked 6th):**
Lack of shared visions of sustainable solutions for DAC water and wastewater needs within community planning documents, water planning documents, individual water and wastewater provider plans, county general plans, and Integrated Regional Water Management Plans (IRWMPs), lack of regional coordination and planning with larger entities in planning efforts.

Ms. Firestone asked the group whether anyone felt that what the group had ranked was not an accurate reflection of the group's priorities. A participant said lack of funding may be the most important but didn't see how the study could address the problem.

Ms. Firestone said that it was important to keep in mind that some solutions to priority issues will be projects while others will be policy recommendations.

Ms. Firestone asked whether the group could agree on the top priorities that were listed. Vice Chairman Valle asked if the group could vote at the next

meeting on the priorities. Ms. Firestone stated that in order for the project team to stay on schedule the list needed to be finalized at this meeting. He asked for a roll call vote to approve the prioritization list as ranked. It was approved unanimously.

Ms. Firestone requested that participants turn in their handouts to the consultants.

Ms. Firestone asked the group to clarify whether they wanted to narrow down the list of priority issues to a smaller number than the 15 that were included in the priority list. She explained that the study's resources would be used to provide solutions to the priority issues identified by the Committee. She went on to say that in order to best use the available resources a smaller list would allow the project team to concentrate their efforts to the top priorities as identified by the SOAC. Isabel Soloro stated that it would be better to focus on a few issues and be able to provide more attention and resources. One participant suggested that the top five priorities should be the priority issues. There was discussion about whether that meant the issues ranked 1-5, which was actually 6 separate issues because two were tied for third place, or whether it was the top 5 issues total. Eugene Patterson made a motion to focus on the first top 5 priorities, not including duplicates. It was clarified that this meant the issues ranked 1-4 since there were two tied for 3rd. Marisela Mares Alatorre seconded the motion. Sue Ruiz asked whether there was the opportunity for discussion. Supervisor Valle said that there was a motion on the table and asked for a vote by roll call.

Ms. Akins called roll and members cast their votes. The following SOAC members voted in favor: Denise Kadara, Maricela Mares-Alatorre, Eugene Patterson, Juventino Gonzalez Rodriguez, Richard Valle, and Charles Lackey. The following SOAC members dissented: Becky Quintanna, Sue Ruiz, and Donald Denney. The motion carried with 6 votes in favor and 3 against.

Ms. Firestone stated that it was important to strive for consensus if possible so that the whole group would feel the prioritized list accurately represented the issues the region faced. She expressed concern that the process was not allowing for that to happen. She asked if people that voted against the motion could explain what their concerns were.

Ms. Ruiz stated that she felt strongly that the lack of political will and public support should be included as that was the only reason these issues would be addressed or not.

Vice Chairman Valle explained that a vote was taken and if there was concern it should be taken up at the beginning of the next SOAC meeting.

Chairman Valle asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Charlie Parker made the motion to adjourn the meeting.

Meeting adjourned.