

# KINGS COUNTY WATER COMMISSION MINUTES

**DISTRICT 1**  
John Howe

**DISTRICT 2**  
Mark Gilkey - Chair

**DISTRICT 3**  
Jim Verboon

**DISTRICT 4**  
Craig Pedersen

**DISTRICT 5**  
Don Mills

**MEMBER AT LARGE**  
Brian Ehlers – Vice Chair

**SPECIAL DISTRICT  
REPRESENTATIVE**  
Harold Reed

**CITY REPRESENTATIVE**  
John Gordon

**CITY REPRESENTATIVE**  
Harlin Casida

**KINGS COUNTY**

**COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AGENCY STAFF:** Greg Gatzka (559) 852-2682 Chuck Kinney (559) 852-2674

**CALL TO ORDER:** A special meeting of the Kings County Water Commission (KCWC) was called to order by Chairman Gilkey at 4:00 p.m., on March 24, 2014. The KCWC meeting was held in the Multi-Purpose Room of the Ag Commissioner's Multi-Purpose Room, 680 N. Campus Drive,, Hanford, California.

Roll call of members was conducted by Secretary Gatzka, and a quorum of appointed Committee members were in attendance.

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Don Mills, Brian Ehlers, Mark Gilkey, Craig Pedersen, John Gordon, Harold Reed, John Howe, Harlin Casida

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Jim Verboon

**STAFF PRESENT:**

Greg Gatzka - Director, Erik Kaeding – Deputy County Counsel, Chuck Kinney – Deputy Director - Planning, Terri Yarbrough – Executive Secretary

**VISITORS PRESENT:**

Alvaro Preciado, Doug Verboon, Joe Neves, Steve Stadler, J.J. Westra, Todd Fukuda, Jay Salyer, Dave Orth, David Kahn, Jose Gutierrez, Dennis Mills, Lou Camara, Scott Sills, Dale Melville

**UNSCHEDULED COMMENTS:** None

**ELECTION OF OFFICERS:** A motion was made and seconded (Howe/Mills) to nominate Mark Gilkey for Chairman and close the nominations. Motion carried unanimously. A motion was made and seconded (Howe/Mills) to nominate Brian Ehlers for Vice Chairman and close the nominations. Motion carried unanimously. Erik Kaeding also reported that a resolution regarding the election of officers is in conflict with the bi-laws. He recommended placing this on a future agenda to correct the conflict. The Commission directed Mr. Kaeding to draft the documents necessary to change the bi-laws regarding the election of officers for action at the next meeting.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** A motion was made and seconded (Mills/Pedersen) to approve the minutes of the November 25, 2013 meeting. Motion carried unanimously with Gordon and Casida abstaining.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

**Kings Update on Water/Drought Conditions in Kings County and the Continuing Declaration of Local Emergency – Steve Haugen and Erik Kaeding**

Mr. Steve Haugen provided an update on the water levels in the Sierras and compared 2014 to 2013. He reported that water deliveries this year will be approximately 25-26% of what would be delivered in a normal year. Erik Kaeding reported that every reservoir except Pyramid Lake is below historic capacities and there has been an increase in wildfires to three times the average. Mr. Kaeding reported that there would continue to be reduced pumping from the Delta due to the Delta smelt. On January 15 the US Department of Agriculture issued a drought disaster designation which covered Kings County. He also reported that the Governor issued a drought emergency, but it is a voluntary reduction and doesn't have any teeth to it. The Governor did sign two bills that will allow for drought relief. Chairman Gilkey reported that after the Governor declared an emergency, the Department of Water wanted to determine what needs were for health and safety water and critical needs water. Chairman Gilkey reported that a request was submitted for critical needs on behalf of the county for Lemoore Naval Air Station for ag purposes for bird strikes and for GWF for energy. Mr. Pedersen asked if there would be power generation issues related to Pine Flat Reservoir. Mr. Mills reported that Southern California Edison is anticipating rolling brown outs.

The Commission also asked to have a discussion at a future meeting regarding potential energy shortages due to the impacts of the drought on hydroelectric power.

No action was taken by the Commission on this item.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**A. 2014 State Legislative Report – Michael Nordstrom**

Mr. Nordstrom provided an update on current bills related to water issues which the state legislature is considering. The bill sponsored by Valley Ag Water Coalition is a voluntary bill and doesn't grant any authority or pumps to be shut off or a moratorium. The bill does address monitoring, measuring and reporting. He reported that the State is saying they want to leave the monitoring to the local agencies. There is a three to five year window to enhance the monitoring plan for sustainability and then fifteen to twenty years to implement the plan. The areas driving this are east Stanislaus, Red Top south of Hwy 152 and the Westlands area.

No action was taken on this item.

**B. Groundwater Management Discussion – David Orth**

Mr. David Orth reported that the Governor's Cabinet and Deputy Cabinet have formed a Drought Task Force and Ground Water Management Advisory Committee. The main issues they are addressing is what tools do local and regional water management agencies need to obtain sustainability, what can the State do to assist and what triggers should initiate action by the Water Board for non compliance. He stated that the general focus is to assist local and regional agencies and discussing the ability to assess ground water fees, require metering authorization for local agencies in order to allocate water or to establish temporary or long term extraction limits. He stated if we don't carefully manage these issues there could be significant economic impacts to the State and Southern San Joaquin Valley. If the local agencies don't organize or adopt a plan the State Board would have some authority to step in. It still needs to be determined what authority the State Board would have. A concern is that the Administration intends to fix this and put a policy bill into

a budget trailer package which wouldn't allow for any public discussion. Mr. Orth recommends placing more attention on legislation than an action plan at this point in time. Mr. Mills suggested waiting and see what the legislation is going to be. He stated that ACWA formed a groundwater task force and has spent the last 60 days to develop recommendations and concepts to frame the discussion going forward.

It was the consensus of the Commission to wait until more information is known and discuss at the next meeting.

**C. Dry Year Transfer Program – Jacob Westra**

Jacob Westra provided an overview of the State Water Project Contractor Dry Year Program. He reported that by March 31 the sellers will have to commit to how much water is available. This is for water north of the Delta. Mr. Westra stated that 2,000 acre feet has been requested for the Lemoore Naval Air Station. Mr. Mills also asked for support for trading water outside of the county to be paid back in a future year at a multiple of 8-10 acre feet which would help to balance groundwater overdraft and help other areas save fruit trees.

A motion was made and seconded (Mills/Gordon) to recommend that the Board of Supervisors support in principle the dry year program and is in favor of water transfer programs. Motion carried unanimously.

**MISCELLANEOUS**

**A. Staff Comments** – None

**B. Member Comments** – Chairman Gilkey reported that the State Water Project Contract Extension committee has reached an agreement in principle. The Department of Water Resources would like each contractor, which includes Kings County, to sign onto the agreement in principle which will be drafted by April 6, 2014. Chairman Gilkey will put together a presentation for the next meeting.

John Gordon asked for a study session on how municipalities can work together with agriculture to preserve surface and ground water.

**C. Correspondence** – None

**ADJOURNMENT**

The next scheduled regular meeting of the Water Commission is Monday, May 19, 2014. The meeting was adjourned at 6:55 pm.

Respectfully submitted  
KINGS COUNTY WATER COMMISSION



Greg Gatzka, Secretary