

# North Bay Watershed Association Board of Directors Meeting - Summary

September 2, 2022 | 9:30 – 11:30 a.m.  
MEETING AND TOUR HELD AT THE  
Central Marin Sanitation Agency  
1301 Andersen Dr, San Rafael, CA 94901

Zoom available for those wishing to attend virtually  
[www.nbwatershed.org](http://www.nbwatershed.org)

## 1. **Welcome and Call to Order—Directors or Member Representatives Present Included:**

Michael Boorstein – Central Marin Sanitation Agency	Ryan Gregory – Napa Sanitation District
Cory Bytof – City of San Rafael	Rick Fraitas – North Marin Water District
Leon Garcia – Napa County Flood Control and Water Resources	Jean Mariani – Novato Sanitary District
Damon Connolly – County of Marin	Elizabeth Patterson – Solano County Water Agency
Chris Choo – County of Marin	Andy Rodgers – NBWA
Susan Gorin – County of Sonoma	Indigo Bannister – NBWA
Megan Clark – Las Gallinas Valley Sanitary District	Gregory Pierce – UCLA Human Right to Water Solutions Lab
Curtis Paxton – Las Gallinas Valley Sanitary District	Susan Stompe – Public
Jack Gibson – Marin Municipal Water District	Matt Sagues – Marin Water
Larry Russell – Marin Municipal Water District	

Ten NBWA board members attended the meeting comprised of 22-member agency staff, stakeholders, partners, and interested members of the public.

Call to Order – Director Gibson called the meeting to order at 9:36 am via Zoom.

## 2. **General Public Comment - None**

## 3. **Agenda Review and Approve Past Meeting Minutes**– Director Gibson asked for any Board members to speak up if there were requested changes to the agenda. No comments.

Director [inaudible] moved to approve the agenda and minutes; Director Mariani seconded—  
Unanimously accepted.

## 4. **Treasurer's Report**

Andy presented a final version of the June Treasure's Report, along with the report from August. No comments. Director Mariani moved to approve the June and August Treasure's Reports. Director Boorstein seconded—Unanimously accepted.

## 5. **Guest Presentation— Causes and Consequences of Urban Tap Water Trust and Equity**

*Gregory Pierce, Director, UCLA Human Right to Water Solutions Lab*

Gregory provided an overview of the causes and consequences of public trust (and mistrust) of drinking water quality in public water supplies in the Bay Area and throughout California and the associated inequities in disadvantaged communities.

*The Role of Infrastructure Neglect in Under-reliance on the Tap in Disadvantaged Urban Communities*  
Defining Terms: Safe, Clean and Mistrust

- Tap water is safe when it does not violate primary, health-related standards
- Tap water is clean when the water provided does not violate “secondary” standards mostly related to color, taste or smell
- Mistrust occurs when customers do not believe their tap water is safe for drinking

- Research suggests that customers are more likely to mistrust their tap water when it is unclear than when it is unsafe

Disadvantaged Communities and Tribal Involvement Program-Funded regionally through the Department of Water Resources.

- Goals and Objectives
  - Work with disadvantaged, economically distressed, underrepresented, and tribal communities to:
  - Document needs
  - Identify possible solutions
  - Develop projects to implement the solutions
  - Obtain implementation funding in 2021
- Process
  - Community Outreach Partners/Tribal Organizations contracted to:
  - Conduct Needs Assessment surveys & community meetings
  - Develop Project Concept Proposals

*Regional Tap Water Quality Testing Program: Building Community Engagement and Trust in Drinking Water*

Consequences of Mistrust

Individuals who mistrust tap water rely on tap alternatives which cause:

- Negative health effects
- High out of pocket expenditure
- Stress and indignity

Additional negative impacts include:

- Environmental externalities
- Systems' revenue and public confidence

Gregory provided an overview of past research on mistrust (SES and Experience), potential origin points of tap water mistrust, and results: Infrastructure Contributions in LA City

- Mistrust framed as behavioral rather than rational response in disadvantaged communities
- “Future interventions should encourage tap water use by *dispelling misconceptions and educating* low- income people in urban areas of LA County”

Stakeholders who need to be involved:

Given the complexity and diffused responsibility and authority to address tap water distrust concerns, the following stakeholders can and should all take active steps to effect solutions:

1. concerned residents;
2. local government decision-makers;
3. County Public Health;
4. affected water systems;
5. State Division of Drinking Water; and
6. legal advocacy groups

Bay Area Process (Wrapped up)

- Community & Tribal Partners to choose from pre-set analyte panels
- SimpleLab to furnish Community & Tribal Partners with DIY Sampling Kits
- Samples sent to labs via USPS; optional digital notes, photographs, and point-of-test surveys collected
- SimpleLab to provide lab results in PDF (paper) or html (online) formats
- Community & Tribal Partners to organize follow-up community meetings

### Top Draft Lessons learned from Bay Area

- Stakeholders at all points in the process will have many Qs and desire for ad hoc conversations...only so much can plan this out v. have built in flexibility
- One must try, but information cannot be explained to all stakeholders' satisfaction
- How to advise CPs on what to test for...different priorities here
- How to measure WQ issues of concern and trust/affordability rigorously, while respecting survey fatigue
- Few testing firms (labs) to do this work
- Providing filter information (different opinions and tradeoffs here)
- Few premise plumbing solutions once problems are identified...what is the path forward or is this work inherently limited to problem identification
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### Questions/Comments

Director Gibson: How common is it, for when there are community health issues, it gets associated with water quality? How do you handle those scenarios?

Gregory Pierce: Those scenarios are not uncommon. There are different reasons that people distrust the water quality. His recommendation is to listen to communities and to provide education and outreach.

Director Fraites: What is the take-away here? Water Districts vs plumbing. Would you say one of the reasons related to mistrust is the plumbing?

Gregory Pierce: There may be areas in which water Districts could be sending out bad water, he can't speak to that.

Director Patterson: To what extent does the roll of the bottling companies play in inflating the mistrust in tap water? Tap

Gregory Pierce: There is book by Peter H. Gleick that covers a lot of the topics that you mentioned regarding bottled water. Bottle water is much less regulated than tap water. The goal is to keep getting the message out regarding the actual cost of water.

Director Gregory: There isn't enough respect for municipal water because it is a lot cheaper. Have you thought about what happens when potable reuse becomes more prevalent? Would the perception of tap water get worse?

Gregory Pierce: He is optimistic that it won't be as much of an issue, except for maybe some messaging/education challenges.

Director Russell: On the same topic of potable reuse/reclaimed water, George Tchobanoglous out of UC Davis suggests the term "purified water" be used. He also thinks water quality education should start in schools.

Gregory Pierce: He agrees changing the language would help; however, some water agencies are comfortable and some aren't.

Director Patterson: Orange County has done some messaging that can be referred to. Another challenge is the distrust in government as a whole that water agencies have to overcome. She recommends the bottled water industry have higher standards and require plastic bottles be from recycle materials.

Chris Choo: What recommendations do you have to improve things and make the most of IRWM-funded projects?

Gregory Pierce: Education and outreach. Incentivizing landlords to update plumbing.

Director Fraites: Is there any meaningful legislation happening at the state level to help with the plumbing issues?

Gregory Pierce: None currently. He is optimistic that in the future it may change. He has resources if anyone is interested in helping in this effort.

Chris Choo [CHAT]: Can NBWA work with our member agencies to streamline guidance for the private property owners to make these improvements? I've heard plenty of expertise here. Standards for pipes and maybe some technical expertise in some way?

*[No response was provided.]*

*Any questions and comments can be directed to [gspierce@ucla.edu](mailto:gspierce@ucla.edu)*

**6. Executive Director Report**

*Andy Rodgers, Executive Director*

Due to time limitations, this topic was postponed until the next meeting.

**7. Central Marin Sanitation Agency – Organic Waste Treatment and Energy Generation Facility**

General Manager Jason Dow and staff provided participants an opportunity to view and learn about this impressive facility.

**8. Announcements and Adjourn**

Meeting adjourned at 11:05 am

Next Meeting: October 7, 2022, Zoom

SUBMITTED BY: Andy Rodgers, Executive Director, NBWA