



**San Francisco Public Utilities Commission
Citizens' Advisory Committee
Water Subcommittee**

MEETING MINUTES

**Tuesday, July 22, 2025
5:30 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.
525 Golden Gate Ave., 3rd Floor Tuolumne Conference Room**

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Meeting Recording URL

https://sfwater.zoom.us/rec/share/wO543NGVgQrn6jIlgA99-mPZLJocbykakqi49zk17ydBryBA0Aeo-eXcPOAmL3L9DqUx_ayl3ofT4SW

Meeting Passcode

305822

Mission: The Water Subcommittee reviews water supply system reliability, water conservation, recycling, regional cooperation efforts, and other relevant plans and policies. ([Admin Code 5.140-142](#))

Members:

Jennifer Clary (Chair) (D11)	Aaron Hebert (D9)	Eliahu Perszyk (M-Large
Douglas Jacuzzi (D4)	Thomas Smegal (M-Reg'l	Water User)
	Water Customers)	

D = District Supervisor appointed, M = Mayor Appointed, B = Board President appointed

Staff Liaisons: Lexus Moncrease and Lupita Garcia
Staff Email for Public Comment: cac@sfwater.org

ORDER OF BUSINESS

1. Call to Order and Roll Call at 5:35 pm

Member present at roll call (3): Clary, Hebert, Perszyk

Members absent (2): Jacuzzi, Smegal

Staff/Presenters: Julie Ortiz, Natalie Stone

2. Approval of the [May 27, 2025](#) Minutes

A motion was made (Perszyk) and seconded (Hebert) to approve the May 27, 2025, Minutes.

The minutes were approved without objection.

Public Comment: None.

Daniel L. Lurie
Mayor

Kate H. Stacy
President

Joshua Arce
Vice President

Avni Jamdar
Commissioner

Steve Leveroni
Commissioner

Meghan Thurlow
Commissioner

Dennis J. Herrera
General Manager



3. Report from the Chair

- Chair welcomes committee members, staff, and the public
 - Member Nagengast has stepped down from the Water Subcommittee

Public Comment: None.

4. Public Comment: Members of the public may address the Committee on matters that are within the committee's jurisdiction and are not on today's agenda (*2 minutes per speaker*).

Public Comment: None.

5. Presentation and Discussion: [Conservation Program Updates](#), Julie Ortiz, Conservation Manager, SFPUC

Presentation:

- Conservation Program Updates
- Presentation Outline
- Goals & Drivers
- Current Core Programs
- New Irrigation Controller Rebate Program
- New Ultra-High Efficiency Toilet Rebate Program
- Expanded Commercial Washer Rebate
- Expanded Commercial Equipment Rebate Program
- Expanded Top User Direct Outreach
- Expanded Courtesy Landscape Irrigation Budget Reports
- Programs Promoted through Extensive Multi-Cultural Outreach
- Metrics for Evaluating Program Reach
- Participation by Year and Savings
- Participation Trends by Month
- 2025 Conservation Plan
- Pacific Institution Evaluation Recap
- Other Sources of Input
- Conservation Measure Recap

Discussion:

- **Chair Clary** asked what a station is.

Staff Ortiz responded it is a zone by the plant types watering need and example being a zone for grass and a zone for shrubs and this is typical for large landscapes such as parks, ball fields, and medical complexes.

- **Member Hebert** asked if the replacement of the washers is to more efficient washers and how the 7 dollars per 748 gallons was derived and whether it has meaning with respect to other SFPUC conservation programs.

Staff Ortiz responded we use Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Energy Star's most efficient list. There are commercial washers that

are extremely large, or tunnel washers or extractors that are not regulated by the Department of Energy, so they do not fit the size limits that the Department of Energy efficiency standards and the EPA Energy Star sets their certification being a significant percentage below the standards. Like in all SFPUC programs, we looked at the best management practices that are out by water efficiency organizations like the California Water Efficiency partnership or the Alliance for Water Efficiency. Not all water utilities have extensive commercial conservation programs because not everyone has a large commercial sector like we do but we look at similar utility providers such as Los Angeles Water and Power, East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD) and Santa Clara Valley Water District and other larger utilities that have programs and where they set savings. We also look at the cost per acre foot and trying to keep a balance of cost per unit of water savings be reasonable with the savings the customer would achieve off their water and wastewater bill and the 7-dollar savings is a pretty substantial one because when it adds up with the rebates, the amounts can be significant.

Member Perszyk commented it used to be a dollar in savings.

Chair Clary commented EBMUD publishes their list and asked what the number is for SFPUC since there are not big changes or sweeps in water like the East Bay and if follow up is done if a customer is using water inefficiently.

- **Staff Ortiz** responded when looking at SFPUC's customer water use across all customers, there is a small pattern of not nearly enough seasonal market water use, with irrigation customers, it is market seasonal use and with commercial customers its less driven by irrigation as it is holidays so you will see a downturn at the end of December. at the State level, they do have us report the volumetric amount and the number of accounts for the top, the 90th percentile. In other words, the top 10% of multifamily and single family and for Commercial, Industrial, and Institutional (CII) we have to report on the top 20%. We definitely are looking at their water use and for those in the highest bracket, our staff will follow up directly with them and we take a look at the water use data to see if it's high occupancy, a water leakage that was alerted through our water leakage alert program, or they may have a home business but if it is not of this, we try multiple ways to reach them.
- **Member Hebert** asked if there is a marginal tax rate for water users and if a single-family home exceeds the normal threshold do they pay a more marginal rate.

Staff Ortiz responded we have a fixed fee rate which is the cost of getting the water to the property and there is the volumetric rate so for residential rates, tier one is up to 3 units and a unit is 748 gallons and if you go over that then it is a higher volumetric rate.

Chair Clary asked if it was still only 2 tiers.

Staff Ortiz responded yes.

- **Member Hebert** commented the top 20% here are not in a different price tier per se, but they could be paying more.

Chair Clary further commented under Proposition 218, it is hard to do tiered rates, and the rates are basically to cover the infrastructure and operations in order to charge different rates for volume, and you need to prove that it is costing you more.

Staff Ortiz responded there have been extensive conversations in the Water industry on how certain rates can encourage more conservation but there is limitation on what we can set. If we were in a declared drought emergency and we had to go into mandatory reductions by customers, which would be the last thing we would do since we would try voluntary savings first, and we have hit our irrigation customers in the past where we set a budget and if they exceed it, they are subject to fines.

Member Perszyk commented in droughts, the rates also increase.

Staff Ortiz responded yes through the drought surcharge.

Chair Clary commented as the SFPUC is implementing new water sources that are more expensive, they need to be built into the tiered rates and maybe this is something that will create more differential over time.

Staff Ortiz responded all of that is take into consideration with our rate setting.

- **Chair Clary** asked how much of Golden Gate Park is on SFPUC water since it's mostly ground and recycled water.

Staff Ortiz responded she is not sure since public parks have multiple accounts, and they will all be consolidated into one report they will receive showing their monthly use against a calculated water efficiency budget that is based on a state formula for landscape irrigation use.

- **Chair Clary** asked if language is tracked as a metric and if any gaps have been identified.

Staff Ortiz responded yes, we look at linguistic isolation under median income, renter or owned and ethnic. We haven't identified any gaps and when you look at all the programs, we've offered throughout the years it's layered together so it's blanketing everywhere. Through the database, we can filter it by year and program so we can look at that but even then, have not been able to see any gaps. It does show however that with measures like toilet incentives, the free devices, the water wise evaluations, participation is skewed toward a higher percentage of people under the median income, higher percentage of people linguistically isolated, and non-white.

- **Member Perszyk** asked how many people have been using the on-site water reuse grant since both this and the green infrastructure grant have deed restrictions on it which makes it hard for those who can apply for the grants.

Staff Ortiz responded she doesn't have the total numbers with her, and we do track how many people have had to submit the budget, how many have had to comply, how many have voluntarily pursued the grant and can get back to members with the data and when we have grant requirements, we must comply with at the City level.

Member Hebert commented he deals with a similar issue at work, and they've contemplated something like license agreements or an agreement in perpetuity and there may be some other way the City could be assured that they are going to get a return on their grant.

Chair Clary asked is there someone on staff who will and what other cities are doing this and if they also are doing deed restrictions.

Staff Ortiz responded that is a good point and she is not knowledgeable on this but is happy to follow up with the staff who manage the onsite reuse program.

- **Member Perszyk** asked if there is ever a situation where the data says there is a leak but there actually is not a leak and commented they have been trying to set up a leak alert and basing it off SFPUC metrics and it only works for houses because it gets really hard once you go into big buildings.

Staff Ortiz responded yes, and we always say you may have a leak. With large multi-family properties and commercial properties, we recognize that it could be a factor of some equipment or people using the building at all hours and we even look at several other factors for example there is a large ballpark where it has a season of no use.

- **Chair Clary** asked if they work with the Power division on joint rebates and if there are any programs designed for small businesses and commented she has found that you have to do a lot of handholding with small businesses and asking them to respond and do a rebate is not very successful and asked if they no longer have a direct install program and what is done for customers in the low-income rate assistance program and asked how many multi-family homes updated their fixtures..

Staff Ortiz responded we work with them where we can and are aware of each other's programs when it comes to the consumer level rebate programs and co promoting where we can and staking the rebates becomes harder because they are different nature. For example, Power has participated in regional efforts to encourage the electrification and replacement of gas-powered heat pumps so we have a repay on a recirculating pump that can help reduce water use and if the heater is old and falling apart, we would send them over to

the Power program. We work closely with the San Francisco Environment Department (SFE) and are a partner in the Green Business Program and are part of doing the evaluations when business apply where they will get information about our programs including those that don't need any funds spent like the waterwise evaluation and free devices and we are coordinating with SFE in terms of what might be covered in rebate programs that is related to water proficiency items. The direct install program was for toilets and is ending this year after launching in 2010 and marketing was heavily focused on customers who were in the rate assistance program and multi-family properties. There are many other services that help low-income rate assistance program participants like free waterwise evaluations where the inspectors go out there and they do install things like shower heads, aerators, toilet repair parts. A component of the conservation model is a saturation model where we estimate the population of common plumbing fixtures that have efficiency standards like toilets, showers and faucets and we can see what the estimated efficiency rates are for fixtures in the multi-family sector and it is high for example for toilets is more than 80% efficient.

Member Perszyk commented if you have the numbers and data, it would be good to publish.

- **Member Hebert** further commented he understands the reasons behind the changes in the program, but at a glance, it seems the programs the low-income folks could benefit from are being taken away and by adding in this data, it shows the work has already been mostly done with about 20% left to transition to high-efficiency fixtures and it would be good to highlight what programs still exist.

Staff Ortiz responded there are a suite of measures that people can still participate in that does not cost money and in the 2025 plan that talks about estimated saturation rates of fixtures and the remaining percent designated efficient by single and multi-family homes will be updated.

- **Chair Clary** asked who composes the 20%.

Member Perszyk further asked what is done with the data and if it is broken down by neighborhoods.

Staff Ortiz responded it is multi-layered and there isn't one perfect way to find them. We work through the apartment association, direct outreach, data on the property, finding information out from the department of building inspections.

Chair Clary commented she is thinking about the increased number of accounts that are in overage and finding a way to pair those and if we find a way to bring the bill down, then maybe they will be more likely to pay it and commented unlike the conservation programs, payment assistance programs are not well subscribed.

Staff Ortiz responded through our Customer Service Bureau we have payment plans and there is a high bill adjustment program. The legal notice program is a feeder to the high bill adjustment program because when customers are getting notices, we let them know about resources and many do engage in the high bill adjustment program.

Member Hebert commented when he was looking at this appointment there was the issue of leak notices and bill adjustments where some were not getting it and it is important for the utility provider to help people wherever they can.

Member Perszyk further commented with leak notices, some visualizations will be able to help customers understand for example, what day did it start, what was the water usage before and now, and this helps figure out why is it happening.

Chair Clary asked if water meters only doing 4 readings a day what happens when a leak is a lateral failure and if demand water heaters are part of the rebate program.

Staff Ortiz responded they are transmitted to our data system 4 time a day and there is a project lead by the Customer Service team that will be replacing the account portal which won't be ready until 2027 and in the new portal, the leak alerts will be linked. A lateral could be between the house and the meter, and the most common leak is a toilet leak and blind leaks in pipes and busted hot water pipes and hot water tanks are a smaller percentage. The Power Enterprise has an incentive program to electrify and replace gas powered heaters.

- **Member Perszyk** commented the State is requiring businesses to remove non-functional turf by January 2027 and asked if any outreach has been done for this.

Staff Ortiz commented on top of the CII user letter there is information about this as well as the courtesy irrigation reports that will be sent out to irrigation customers. As part of drought restrictions, there was a restriction of irrigating non-functional water with potable water and will be working with City Attorney's Office to make this permanent. We're analyzing and trying to see where there is non-functional turf in our retail area and our approach will be to outreach directly to these sites. San Francisco has had a permanent ban for a while on the use of ornamental turf in public median and have been working with the Department of Public Works on this. We don't have a residential turf replacement program because we don't have the same market EBMUD has.

Public Comment: None.

6. Future Agenda Items and Resolutions

Standing Subjects

- Groundwater
- Water Quality

Specific Subjects

- Green Infrastructure - *Tentatively WW Topic*
- Integrating Tribal Leaders into SFPUC Land Management Decisions
- State Board Water Rights
- Water Enterprise Environmental Stewardship Policy Implementation Report
- Debate about Bay Delta – Member Sandkulla suggested everyone watch the February 5, 2021, Commission workshop about the Voluntary Agreement
- COVID and Long-term Affordability Program
- Implementation of the Bay Delta Plan Flow Requirement
- Hetch Hetchy Water and Power Division Update
- State Policy and Programs on Affordability or Low-Income Rate Assistance (LIRA)
- Bay Delta Plan and voluntary settlement agreement
- Legislative Update
- State of the Regional Water System Report – Bi-annual report
- Drought resilience: 3-year water supply update
- Water Equity and Homelessness
- State of Local Water Report
- Retail Conservation Report
- Harry Tracy Water Treatment Plant tour

Adopted Resolutions for Follow Up

- Resolution in Support of a Resilient Water Supply [adopted August 17, 2021](#)
- Resolution in Support of the Southern Skyline Boulevard Ridge Trail Extension Project [adopted April 20, 2021](#)
- Resolution in Support of Interim Emergency Rate Assistance Program and Revised Community Assistance Program [adopted July 21, 2020](#)
- Resolution in Support of Improved Communications Related to the San Francisco Groundwater Supply Project [adopted August 21, 2018](#)
- Resolution in Supporting Stewardship and Public Access in the Redeveloped Lake Merced West Property [adopted in March 15, 2016](#)
- Resolution on Impacts of Drought on System Maintenance and Improvements [adopted January 19, 2016](#)

Public Comment: None.

7. **Announcements/Comments** Please visit www.sfpuc.org/cac for final confirmation of the next scheduled meeting, agenda, and materials.

Public Comment: None.

8. **Adjournment at 7:07 pm.**

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