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## Urban Water Institute's Spring Conference • February 17-18, 2021 A Path Going Forward • Virtual Lively Interactive Conference

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Urban Water Institute's February 2021 Virtual Conference Program mixes water legislative and policy issues with boots-on-the-ground candid conversations with Utility General Managers and showcases the challenges to California's agriculture as SGMA is implemented.

### Wednesday, February 17, 2021

**Preconference Tutorial—Walk Through—How to Navigate the Virtual Conference Experience— pre-recorded with text pushed out in multiple emails, etc.**  
Travis Watson

*Preconference sponsored Door Dash lunch by Woodard & Curran*

#### **1:00 PM Opening Remarks & Introduction**

Ane Deister, Urban Water Institute, Welcome  
Ane Deister introduces the State and Federal Report presentation

#### **1:05 PM State and Federal Legislative Update**

*A view from Washington DC. Has anything changed? Are we on a path forward?*

Eric Sapirstein, ENS Resources Inc.  
Eric O'Donnell, Townsend Public Affairs, Inc.

#### **1:50 PM Break— Question 1 of GAME**

*There will be 5 breaks during this 2-day event. Each break will include a Water Trivia Question. You must act quickly as the question is time sensitive. There is time remaining during the break for you to network with other participants and drill down into details about panel topics and presenters.*

#### **2:00 PM Is There Light at the End of This Tunnel? Update on Delta Conveyance**

*As California moves forward to address water supply resilience, is it an "either a tunnel or local projects" decision?*

Jennifer Pierre, State Water Contractors, Inc.  
Tom McCarthy, Kern County Water Agency  
Steve Arakawa, Metropolitan Water District of Southern California  
Karla Nemeth, Director of Department Water Resources  
Matt Stone, Santa Clarita Valley Water Agency, Moderator

#### **2:45 PM Break— Question 2 of GAME**



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### **2:55 PM Utility General Managers—Managing in Uncertain Times**

*Three top utility managers engage in an open dialogue to discuss how the pandemic has affected their operations and the response of their customers.*

Paul Cook, Irvine Ranch Water District

Steve Welch, Contra Costa Water District

Devon Upadhyay, Metropolitan Water District of Southern California

Craig Miller, General Manager, Western Municipal Water District, Moderator

### **3:35 PM Break—Question 3 of GAME**

### **3:45 PM Water Leaders Looking Forward— Climate Change Adaptations**

*The most recent class of the Water Education Foundation's Water Leaders program reports on their 'take' in dealing with Climate Change as a pathway forward.*

Stan Ali, Contra Costa Water

Dakari Barksdale, City of Vallejo

Liz DaBramo, Woodard & Curran

Cora Kammeyer, Pacific Institute, Moderator

### **4:25 PM Break—Question 4 GAME**

### **4:35 PM Not out of the Woods—Wildfires!**

*"A house you can rebuild; a bridge you can restring; a washed-out road you can fill in.  
But there is nothing you can do about a tree but mourn." Louise Dickinson Rich*

Chief Thom Porter, Director of CALFIRE

Jay Jasperse, Chief Engineer and Director of Groundwater Management,  
Sonoma County Water Agency

Jared Blumenfeld, Secretary, California Environmental Protection Agency

Senator Bill Dodd, CA State Senate, District 4

Andree Johnson, Woodard & Curran, UWI Board Secretary, Moderator

## **5:35 PM Virtual Wine Tasting and Tall Tales Storytelling, Conference Reception**

**UWI Board members will share a favorite wine and tell why it is their favorite. Participants will vote on whether the story is true or a tall tale.**

*Chairman Rossi will report status of the Game!*



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### Day 2 Program: Thursday, February 18, 2021

#### **9:00 AM Utility General Managers—Town Hall**

*Meet some General Managers recently appointed. Interactive discussion about being a new GM in the California utility world today.*

Larry McKenney, General Manager, Amador County Water  
Sandy Kerl, General Manager, San Diego County Water Authority  
Rick Callendar, General Manager, Valley Water  
Kevin Hunt, Urban Water Institute, Moderator

#### **9:50 AM Break—Question 5 GAME**

*Last Trivia Question*

#### **10:00 AM Potential Impact of implementing SGMA in the San Joaquin Valley:**

*Up to 1 million acres of productive farmland could be retired, that is up from the 750,000 acres projected in 2019 as the more likely scenario by the Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC). Up to 85,000 jobs will be lost each year, with 45,000 of those being farmers, farmworkers and other ag roles. The unemployment rate will increase by 4% for the region, which is already among the highest rates in the state and rise to as much as 12%. Wages will take a \$2 billion hit.*

*Annual farm revenue losses will be \$7.1 billion. The valley's lowest-income communities will take a disproportionately large share of these impacts,...and the worst part is that this will happen every year into perpetuity. (reported in the AgriPulse December 2, 2020)*

#### **SGMA Impact on California Agriculture - To Continue Farming or Not**

*Studies reveal an alarming number of acres at risk of going out of production due to SGMA Compliance.*

David Sunding Ph.D, UC Berkeley

*What is the problem and how bad is it? Dr. Sunding reports up to 1 million acres of productive farmland will be retired as a result of SGMA impacts.*

Bill Diedrich, Farmer, Chair, San Luis Water District, ACWA Ag Committee Chair

*Issues from an active farmer*

Jason Gianquinto, General Manager, Semitropic Water Storage District

*SGMA issues and impacts on water banks.*

Jason Phillips, CEO, Friant Water Authority, Moderator



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### 10:55 AM Adaptations to Preserve California Agriculture - *How to survive SGMA and Continue Farming*

*The California Ag industry isn't sitting back waiting for the world to change—again. Real Farmers weigh into the discussion.*

Scott Hamilton Ph.D., Resource Economist, Hamilton Resource Economics  
*San Joaquin Valley Water Blueprint*

Eric Averett, General Manager, Rosedale Rio Bravo Water Storage District  
*SGMA Management Strategies for the Kern Fan*

Steve Etchegaray, Owner Etchegaray Farm; President, Eastern Tule White Area Growers, Inc.  
*Potential impacts and solutions from a farmer*

Jason Phillips, CEO, Friant Water Authority, Moderator

*The good news is, there is enough extra water most years to keep the Valley whole. (reported in Water Rights, March 11, 2020) - Is this True?*

### 12:00 PM John Rossi, Chair UWI Board—Wrap up and Announce the winner of GAME

*Must be present to win!*

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