

DRAFT

Safe to Swim Network Charter

Date - 2019



Approvals:

Safe to Swim Network Facilitators:

Erick Burres
Citizen Monitoring Coord.
SWRCB-OIMA-CWT
erick.burres@waterboards.ca.gov

_____ (Signature)
_____ (Date)

Karen Black
Beach Program Coordinator
SWRCB-DWQ-Oceans
karen.black@waterboards.ca.gov

_____ (Signature)
_____ (Date)

Alisha Wenzel
CVRWQCB– SWAMP Coord.
CVRWQCB
alisha.wenzel@waterboards.ca.gov

_____ (Signature)
_____ (Date)

California Water Quality Monitoring Council:

Nick Martorano
Director CWQMC
SWRCB-OIMA-CWQMC
nicholas.martorano@waterboards.ca.gov

_____ (Signature)
_____ (Date)

Table of Contents

Approvals	i
Mission Statement	1
Vision Statement	1
Background	2
Opportunities for Action (Figure 1)	3
Purpose of The Safe to Swim Network (Figure 2)	4
Map of Influence (Figure 3)	6
Network Operations and Structure	7
Organizational Diagram (Figure 4)	7
Membership and Representation	7
Formation of Committees	9
Communication	10
Meetings	10
Decision Making Process	12
Document Development Process	13
Budget and Resources	13

MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is to promote a swimmable California by improving stakeholder communication and ensuring data transparency and accessibility to provide meaningful information on water quality and its effect on potential risks associated with recreational water contact

VISION STATEMENT

Our vision is to create a California where everyone knows about all the risks associated with recreating in and around any surface water body prior to coming into contact with its waters. We will identify all potential water quality threats to water recreationists, use the best science and data analytics available, communicate information in the most easily accessible and understandable ways to deliver that information using the most usable media possible

BACKGROUND

California's iconic waters and way of life should be celebrated and preserved. The health of millions of people, billions of dollars from our coastal economy, and millions of jobs are dependent on water quality supporting water contact activities. An estimated 238 million people use and enjoy California's coastal beaches each year. California's lakes, rivers, and other freshwater bodies also provide free exercise and recreational opportunities. These freshwater bodies are important recreational resources for communities that might otherwise have limited access to the coast, natural environments or open spaces.

California has some of the most popular beaches in the country. In addition to being an integral part of California's culture, its beaches are a significant tourist attraction. Tourism is one of the biggest industries in California and its beach goers spend over \$10 billion each year. It has also been reported that California's coastal economy generates more than \$40 billion annually, with the tourism and recreation sectors accounting for 76 percent of all coastal employment.

Water quality contamination poses real health risks to recreators, the negative publicity that comes with poor water quality postings and beach closures, both coastal and inland, undermines the tourism industry. Beach water quality monitoring and strong pollution prevention measures are critical for protecting beach goers from waterborne diseases and safeguarding the tourism industry. This has resulted in California having one of the most extensive and comprehensive monitoring and regulatory programs for coastal beaches in the nation.

Routine monitoring is performed by sixteen local health agencies in coastal counties as part of the Beach Safety Monitoring Program (Beach Program). These local agencies receive grant funding annually, approximately \$1.8 million dollars combined, from the State Water Resources Control Board. Local health agencies are responsible for issuing water quality advisories, pre-emptive warnings (i.e. rain advisories) and closures which protect beach goers from entering unhealthful waters. Publicly owned treatment plants, other dischargers along the coastal zone, environmental groups, and citizen monitoring groups also conduct monitoring activities.

In addition to monitoring its coastal water quality, California is committed to improving and protecting beaches along its coast. California has invested millions of dollars in grants, \$100 million through the Clean Beach Initiative alone, to fund local projects that reduce bacterial contamination along the coast. The State Water Resources Control Board (Water Boards) has also funded research to development more rapid detection methods for knowing when to post beaches, how to track the sources of contamination,

and studies to better understand the relationship between bacterial indicators and incidence of disease.

Besides its iconic coastal beaches and 1,400 miles of coastline, California has nearly 190,000 miles of rivers and more than 3,000 named freshwater lakes and reservoirs that support recreational use. There are currently no requirements to monitor freshwater areas nor is there statewide guidance for posting water quality advisories or closures at these inland waters (waters not addressed in AB 411 (Wayne)).

Besides supporting Water Contact Recreation (REC1- activities such as swimming, surfing, wading...) and Noncontact Water Recreation (REC2- activities such as boating, fishing...) California also supports protecting water quality for other beneficial uses. Some of these uses may also result in direct or indirect water contact, such as TTC: Tribal Traditional & Cultural, TTC: Tribal Subsistence Fishing, and SF: Subsistence Fishing. People engaged in those beneficial uses may also benefit from work conducted to support REC1.

Monitoring Council and Safe to Swim

The California legislature has often shown its support of healthy beaches and protecting water quality through Assembly Bills such as AB 411 (Wayne) Beach Sanitation: Posting, AB 548 (Aroney) Water Quality: Coastal Bays, AB 1429 (Shelley) Water Quality, and AB 1946 (Wayne) Public Beaches: Survey. In 2006 the legislature passed AB 1070 (Kehoe) Water Quality Information Act which created the California Water

ARE OUR AQUATIC ECOSYSTEMS HEALTHY?

- Wetlands

IS IT SAFE TO SWIM IN OUR WATERS?

- Coastal beaches, bays, estuaries

IS IT SAFE TO EAT FISH AND SHELLFISH?

- Sportfish

IS OUR WATER SAFE TO DRINK?

- Groundwater

Dec. 2008—Marshack

Council's Opportunities for Action – Figure 1

Purpose of the
Safe to Swim Network:

- Increase efficiency and effectiveness through collaboration.
- Promote integration and coordination of water quality monitoring, assessment, reporting, scientific investigations, identification of pollution sources, and other related endeavors.
- Increase data sharing and accessibility.
- Address and evaluate emerging technology and assessment methods.
- Utilize the CWQMC's water quality portal to provide information to decision makers and the public.
- Coordinate with other CWQMCN Workgroups regarding shared interests.

Figure 2

Quality Monitoring Council (Council) whose goal is to maximize the efficiency and effectiveness of existing water quality data collection and dissemination and ensure that collected data are maintained and available for use by decision makers and the public.

The Council believed that the best way to coordinate and enhance California's monitoring, assessment and reporting efforts was to first to provide a platform for intuitive, streamlined access to water quality information that directly addresses users' questions (Figure 1). The Council also recommended that issue-specific workgroups, under the overarching guidance of the Council, evaluate existing monitoring, assessment and reporting efforts and work to enhance those efforts to improve the delivery of water quality information to the user. What followed was the creation of a website aiming to provide a single, global access point to a complete set of theme-based web portals for water quality monitoring data. This included the formation of a web portal for "Is it safe to swim in our waters?".

To achieve its solution, the Council envisioned several theme-specific work groups. It was conceptualized, that these Work Groups would be staffed by issue experts representing key stakeholders and that they would develop the web portal devoted to their theme or sub-theme. Each work group, under the overarching guidance of the Council, would evaluate existing monitoring, assessment and reporting efforts and work to enhance those efforts or if needed, develop underlying monitoring and assessment methods and data management procedures according to performance measures defined or otherwise acknowledged by the Monitoring Council, and improve the delivery of water quality information to the user. These work groups would then provide structure and incentive to coordinate disparate monitoring programs, improve the technical infrastructure needed to support that coordination, and act to reduce conflicts and incompatibilities within the technical infrastructure.

It was under this scenario that a new Safe-to-Swim Work Group was convened in 2010. The Council tasked this workgroup to coordinate monitoring and assessment of swimming safety statewide (Figure 2). The Work Group was also tasked to manage and

enhance the My Water Quality web portal "Is It Safe to Swim In Our Waters?". Originally focused primarily on coastal beaches, the Work Group expanded in 2018 to more formally address inland beaches and effectively address all waters in California that support water recreation (REC1 and REC2).

Safe to Swim Work Groups and Emergence of the Safe to Swim Network

To fulfill Work Group needs, the Council via coordination with the Water Boards leveraged pre-existing workgroups. One of these pre-existing workgroups was the collaborative Southern California Beach Water Quality Workgroup which was initially formed in the late 1990's. This Workgroup sought to coordinate coastal beach water quality related monitoring, pollution abatement, public education, and public notification efforts. This effort connected wastewater utilities collecting beach water quality data, health departments who were interpreting the data, and stormwater managers responsible for managing coastal runoff. There were four topics that the group originally set out to discuss and break down silos between the members:

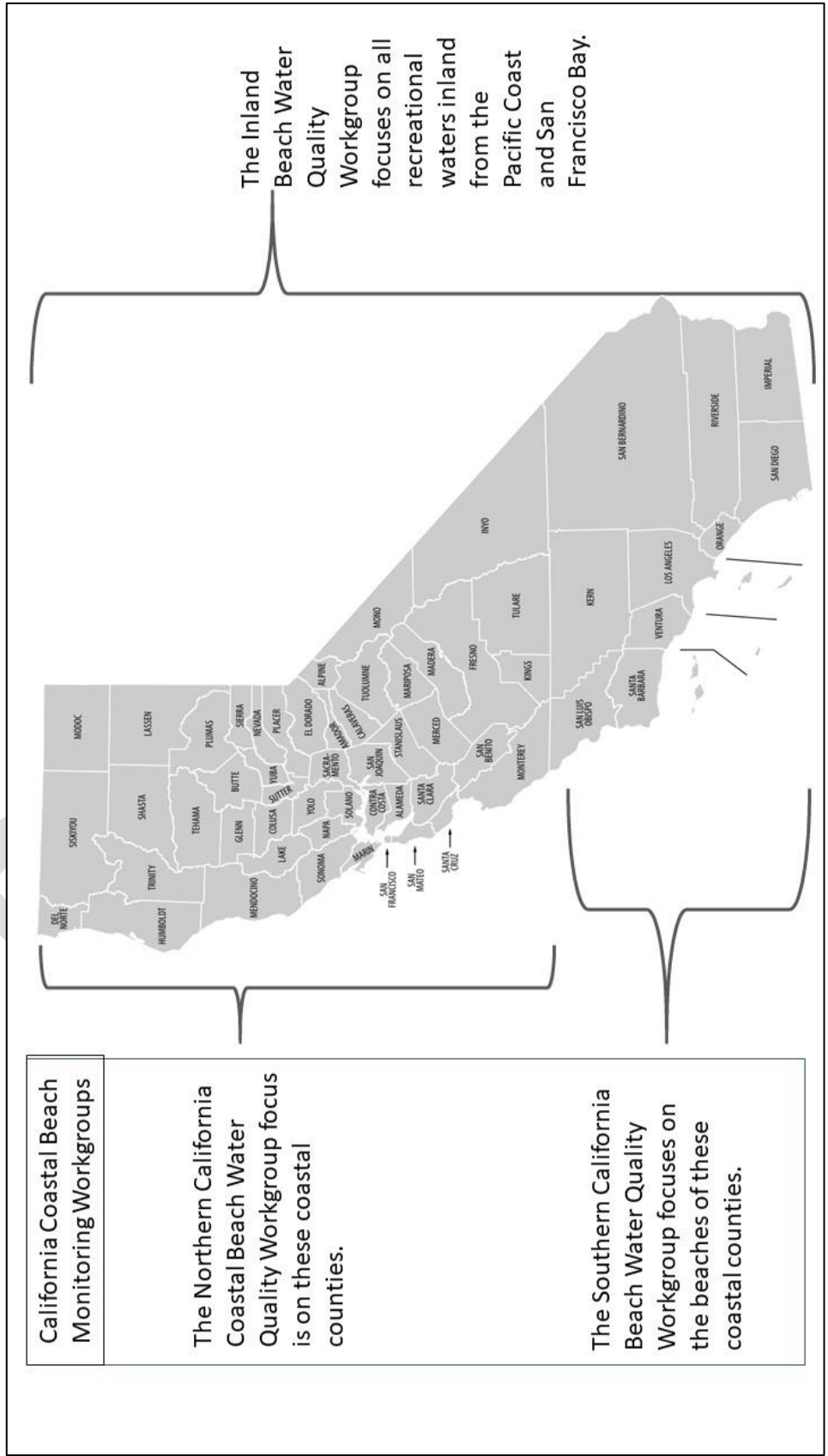
1. Sample testing uniformity (This was before intercalibration studies to compare testing methods and before an effective ELAP accreditation program.).
2. The development of a consistent warning system that was legible and understandable for the public.
3. Creating a database to store beach water quality data.
4. Collaborating with Heal the Bay to come up with an agreed upon method for rating beach health.

In 2004, the Northern California Coastal Beach Water Quality Monitoring Workgroup was formed with the same mission as the Southern California Beach Monitoring Workgroup.

Attempting to fill a Beach Monitoring Workgroup void, in November of 2015, Surface Water Ambient Monitoring Program staff from the Lahontan, North Coast, and Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Boards volunteered to coordinate monitoring and assessment of swimming safety for inland waters. This informal gathering led to the Inland Beach Monitoring Workgroup's formation.

As there were now three distinct workgroups, two coastal and one inland, operating in cooperative independence, it was determined that a network relationship should be developed which would support these three workgroups, address issues common to all of the workgroups, provide communication with the Monitoring Council and represent safe to swim issues statewide.

Map of Workgroup Geographic Influence - Figure 3



California Coastal Beach Monitoring Workgroups

The Northern California Coastal Beach Water Quality Workgroup focus is on these coastal counties.

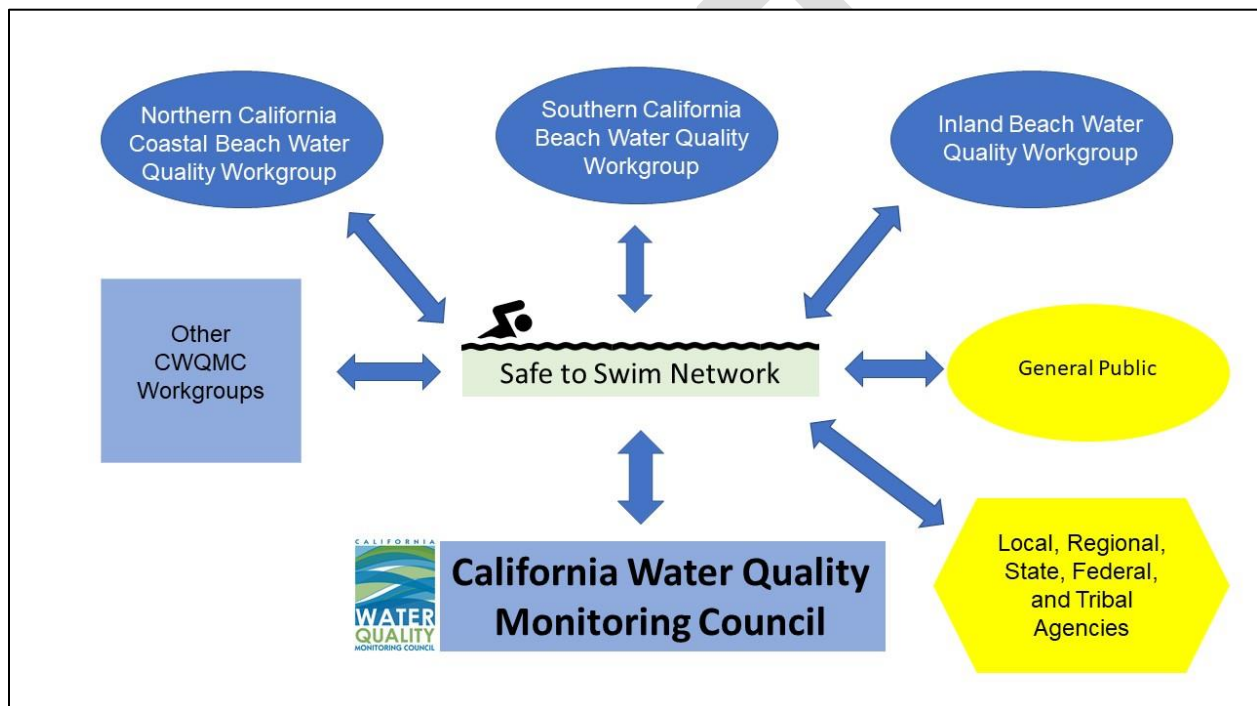
The Southern California Beach Water Quality Workgroup focuses on the beaches of these coastal counties.

The Inland Beach Water Quality Workgroup focuses on all recreational waters inland from the Pacific Coast and San Francisco Bay.

NETWORK OPERATIONS AND STRUCTURE

The Safe to Swim Network (Network) works to support safe to swim issues statewide and assist the three Beach Water Quality Workgroups (Figs. 1 and 2). The Network will also provide improved Safe to Swim communications within the Beach Water Quality Workgroups, the California Water Quality Monitoring Council, CWQMC Workgroups, and others organizations.

The Workgroups will focus on regional safe to swim issues and work collectively with the Network on issues beyond that scale. They will benefit from the broad range of experience, skills, and points of views of their members.



Safe to Swim Organizational Chart
Figure 4

MEMBERSHIP and REPRESENTATION

Network membership is open to all agencies, organizations and their staff that have an interest in local, regional or statewide monitoring and assessment supporting water contact recreation and activities to improve water quality in California's waters. This membership also includes those interested in communicating this information to policymakers, agency staff, and the public. These agencies and organizations may

include governmental agencies (i.e. public works, public health...), Tribes, industry, academia, community-based organizations, non-profit organizations and other stakeholder groups. Participation in the Network, Workgroups, and sub-committees is voluntary. Members are not restricted to attending any Network or Workgroup meeting; are expected to promote the objectives of the Network; and should also serve as liaisons between the Network and their agency, organization and/or community. Members may be asked to leave if they fail to meet the basic criteria or embody the spirit of collaboration.

Members are expected to attend regular meeting and actively participate in discussions and decision-making processes. Additionally, members are asked to identify needs or challenges related to safe to swim issues, share their monitoring activities and results if there are any and assist on subcommittees (as their time permits).

The Network, at its discretion, may form standing or ad hoc committees to focus on specific technical or programmatic areas. These committees will provide a mechanism for more detailed and intensive participation and discussion, development of products, or decision making. Each committee shall select a chair who will serve as a liaison and report to the Network. All members are encouraged to participate in a committee.

Facilitators

The Network and Workgroups have been facilitated by Water Board staff. It is highly encouraged that the facilitators be selected from the diverse Network and Workgroup membership. Facilitators will serve a term of 2 years with the possibility of serving consecutive or non-consecutive tenures without limit. Any member of the Network/Workgroup may nominate another Network/Workgroup member to be considered as one of the facilitators. After all nominations have been submitted and considered by meeting attendees, the selection of a new Facilitator/Co-Chair will be made. The process for selection will be consensus (see section on Network Decision Making).

Facilitators will coordinate with members, the Water Boards, and the Council as needed.

- The facilitators main goal is to lead meetings and discussions, help the Network and or Workgroups improve the way it identifies and solves problems, and facilitate decision making processes.
- Facilitators will use different skills, tools, exercises and natural abilities to keep a group discussion moving smoothly.
- Facilitators will ensure that every team member's voice is sought.
- Facilitators will schedule meetings and prepare agendas.

- Facilitators will arrange, as needed, for meeting note taking and recording meeting attendance.
- Facilitators will work with SWRCB staff for Web-support and other Network/Workgroup IT needs.
- When Co-Facilitators/Co-Chairs exist, they shall work together to achieve the above. When a lead Facilitator is exists, co-facilitators will assist that person.
- Facilitator contact information will be maintained on the Network's website.

FORMATION OF COMMITTEES

The Network and Workgroups may organize committees to address complex problems, increase cooperation and motivation amongst its members and ensure that key priorities are met. Additionally, the Network may also convene expert technical panels that provide reviews, evaluations, and recommendations of methods and technological developments to the Network and the Water Quality Monitoring Council. Any Network or Workgroup member can propose a committee. The proposal will be presented to the facilitator(s) and the membership for consideration. Everyone is encouraged to participate in a subcommittee.

Committees may consist of an individual person or a group of individuals. Committees are appointed by the facilitator(s). A committee has no power per se, except the power(s) assigned to it by its appointer. Ad hoc committees may form for a specific task or objective and may dissolve after the completion of the task or achievement of the objective.

Each committee will appoint its leader or co-leader. The committee leader or co-leaders will be responsible for helping set the strategic direction to guide activities of the committee and ensure its activities are in keeping with the Network and Workgroup objectives and values.

Each subcommittee shall define its objectives and goals and present these to the appropriate facilitators for approval. Recommendations and work products shall be The Monitoring Council via coordination with the Water Boards leveraged pre-existing workgroups presented to the Network facilitators/Co-chairs for approval as well as any progress or accomplishment reports. Committees will share with the membership their activities and progress annually, at a minimum.

Potential Committees:

- Water Quality and Public Health Policy
- Education and Enrichment
- Technical Advisory
- Beach Posting and Risk Communication

- Other....

COMMUNICATION

Internal communications take place during regular and ad hoc meetings and via email. Network members are encouraged to communicate regularly on subjects of interest and to contact other potential collaborators.

All formal communications of the Network with the Council will be directed by the Facilitators. Only Facilitators or the Council's Executive Director may represent the Network unless otherwise approved.

External communication will utilize email and various web-sites. As provided by the Water Boards, the Network and the Workgroups will use a use its subscription email services. Anyone can receive updates by email regarding activities of the Network or Workgroups by subscribing at www.waterboards.ca.gov/resources/email_subscriptions/swrcb_subscribe.html and then by looking under "Monitoring Council Workgroups and My Water Quality Portals...".

The following websites are currently supported as well.

- Is it Safe to Swim in Our Waters?
https://mywaterquality.ca.gov/safe_to_swim/index.html
- California Safe-to-Swim Workgroup/Network
https://mywaterquality.ca.gov/monitoring_council/swim_workgroup/index.html

MEETINGS

All meeting are open to the public. Meeting announcements and agendas will be shared via email (see Communication) and via web-posting. When possible, presentation materials and handouts from these meeting will be web posted. Videos of presentations maybe offered as well.

Meetings topics will typically consist of but are not limited to: informal water quality status updates/reports, policy updates, formal or informal research reports, grant activity, QA/QC, water quality management projects and assessment tools or method. A standing item will be included in each agenda for future topic suggestions.

- The Safe to Swim Network will meet 2-3 times a year. These meetings will rotate between northern and southern California. Remote access will be provided via web-meeting tools.
- Coastal Beach Monitoring Workgroups will be held bi-annually, typically in May and November. Remote access generally is not offered.

- The Inland Beach Monitoring Workgroup will meet bi-annually. It will hold in person meeting that also include remote participation.

Meeting Procedure

One or more of the facilitators will facilitate the meeting according to the announced agenda. When possible any meeting notes taken, presentation media collected, or work products shared will be posted on the Network's website.

Meeting Conduct

Acceptable Behavior

- Come to the meeting with a positive attitude.
- All members and meeting attendees are to be treated with respect and consideration, valuing a diversity of views and opinions.
- Be considerate, respectful, and collaborative.
- Communicate openly with respect for others, critiquing ideas rather than individuals.
- Be prompt in arriving to the meeting and in returning from breaks.
- Turn cell phones off or to vibrate.
- If you must take urgent calls on the cell phone, take your conversation outside.
- Talk one at a time, waiting to be recognized by the meeting facilitator or presenter.
- Limit side conversations.
- Be patient when listening to others speak and do not interrupt them.
- Members need to stay on the topic being discussed.
- When a topic or agenda item has been discussed fully, do not bring the same subject back up.
- Don't make threats or rude comments to members.
- Address any concerns about the discussion or if members feel they cannot talk about issues or concerns during the meeting, they can talk with the meeting facilitator(s).

Unacceptable Behavior

- Harassment, intimidation or discrimination in any form will not be tolerated.
- Physical or verbal abuse will not be tolerated.
- Examples of unacceptable behavior include, but are not limited to, verbal comments related to gender, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, disability, physical appearance, body size, race, religion,

national origin, as well as inappropriate use of nudity and/or sexual images in public spaces or in presentations and threatening or stalking.

- Disruption of meetings, presentations or other communications.

Decision Making Process

The Network will rely on a simple majority consensus-based decision-making processes with non-unanimous decision rules to reach agreement on a course of action to address an issue(s). Each consensus process is unique and because the parties involved design their agreement to fit their circumstances. This will allow the Network to benefit from the collaborative efforts of the whole group and the resulting joint ownership of the final decision(s).

Elements of a Consensus-Based Decision

- All parties agree with the proposed decision and are willing to carry it out;
- No one will block or obstruct the decision or its implementation; and
- Everyone will support the decision and implement it.

Levels of Consensus

- I can say an unqualified “yes!”
- I can accept the decision.
- I can live with the decision.
- I do not fully agree with the decision; however, I will not block it and will support it.

Ground Rules for Decision Making

- The Facilitators/Co-Chairs are resources to take the Network/Workgroup where we agree to go.
- Everyone is Equal: We agree that all participants in the process are equal.
- No Relevant Topic is Excluded: We agree that no relevant topics are excluded from consideration unless we agree they are. This is our opportunity to bring up and thoroughly discuss issues that concern us.
- No Discussion is Ended: We agree that no discussion is ended, including process discussion, ground rules and rule of decision. Agreements reached at prior meetings, unless implemented, are always open for further consideration.
- Respect Opinions: We agree to respect each other’s opinions. We will use gentle candor in comments to each other and will not interrupt.

- **Respect the Time:** We all understand the time constraints we face and agree to respect the time. No one will dominate the discussions, and all participants will have an opportunity to express their opinions.
- **Silence Is Agreement:** We agree that silence on decisions is agreement. The facilitators and other participants cannot read our minds. If it appears that the group is reaching a consensus on an issue, if no one voices disagreement, it is assumed that all are in agreement.
- **Keep the Facilitator Accurate:** We agree to make certain that the facilitators capture what we meant to say. We will keep the facilitators accurate.
- **Non-attribution:** We agree that we will not attribute ideas or comments made by participants to others outside of this process.
- **Rule of Decision:** We agree that the rule of decision is Consensus, as described above. We agree to strive for consensus. If agreement by all participants on an issue is not possible, we will seek to develop a clear and balanced statement of the areas of disagreement. Neutrality by any participant does not constitute a lack of consensus.
- **Media:** We agree that all of our meetings are open to the media and to the public unless we close all or a portion of them by consensus.
- **Substitutes/Proxies:** We agree that we will not send substitutes or proxies. We may send observers to meetings, but they will not have participant status.
- **Have Fun:** We agree to do our best to enjoy the process and to help other participants do so as well.

Finalizing a Decision

The level of agreement necessary to finalize a decision will consist of a simple majority. Decision making votes will occur at in-person meetings.

DOCUMENT DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

All formal outputs of the Network or Workgroups including documents, position papers, education materials and responses to public policy must be approved by the Facilitator(s) before these outputs are made publicly available. Certain outputs may also require the approval by the Council's Executive Director.

BUDGET & RESOURCES

The Network does not receive funding from the Council, however it has received support from the Water Boards for facilitators, remote meeting services and website support.

- Water Quality Portal
https://mywaterquality.ca.gov/safe_to_swim/index.html
- Network and Workgroup websites
https://mywaterquality.ca.gov/monitoring_council/swim_workgroup/index.html

Meeting spaces for the Network and Workgroups has been provided by the Southern California Coastal Water Research Project, East Bay Regional Parks Districts, and the Water Boards.

The Network will actively foster and support efforts via the Network that will help make more efficient use of federal, tribal, state, regional, and academic resources that address safe to swim concerns and further the Network's mission. The Network encourages resource sharing including but not limited to lab capacity, field personal, training opportunities amongst its members to further the Network's mission.

The Network's website will also identify online resources such as Quality Assurance Project Plan guidance and QA/QC reports, sampling methods, training videos, data sharing resources, relevant agency websites, legislation, and other safe to swim programs.

The Network members are encouraged to pursue grants to help the Network fulfill its mission and related tasks. Members may request letters of support from the Network and the Council. All requests should be submitted to the Facilitators. If the project proposal is directly relevant to the Network's goals a letter of support will be issued. If deemed also desirable, a letter of support from the Council will be requested by Network Facilitators.

When the Network is awarded a grant, the Principal Investigator will be a Water Board staff-person. This person will be the primary individual responsible for the preparation, conduct, and administration of a research grant, cooperative agreement, training or public service project, contract, or other sponsored project in compliance with applicable laws and regulations and institutional policy governing the conduct of sponsored research.

On a jointly awarded grant, the co-investigator for the agency receiving the funds shall take on the lead responsibilities of the Principle Investigator. The other Co-Investigator will also be obligated to ensure the project is conducted in compliance with applicable laws and regulations and institutional policy governing the conduct of sponsored research.