

## Staff Summary for June 19-20, 2024

**10A. Commission Executive Director's Report****Today's Item**Information Action 

Receive updates from the executive director and staff on items of note since the previous regularly-scheduled Commission meeting (April 17-18, 2024).

**Summary of Previous/Future Actions (N/A)****Background**

The Commission employs an executive director to assist in conducting the Commission's operations and ensuring that its wide range of responsibilities and authorities are fulfilled daily. To ensure the ability to maintain functionality in all its capacities, the Commission has delegated various authorities to its executive director, who "...shall report to the Commission at each regular meeting on important delegated actions."

Today's report covers four topics:

- [Justice, equity, diversity and inclusion \(JEDI\) awareness and planning](#)
- [Service-based budgeting](#)
- [Personnel](#)
- [California Environmental Quality Act](#)

***JEDI Awareness and Planning***

As part of developing the Commission's JEDI plan, staff has been including JEDI activities and information in staff and Commission meetings. Today, there are three highlights: the Commission stakeholder engagement survey, Pride Month, and Immigrant Heritage Month.

***JEDI Survey***

The Commission is developing a stakeholder engagement plan as part of its broader effort to develop a JEDI plan. Public input is essential in this process, and to gather valuable insights, KH Consulting Group (KH) – the independent, third-party consultant retained by the Commission to assist with its JEDI planning efforts– will distribute a survey to better understand the perspectives and experiences of current and potential stakeholders and partners, and identify areas where the Commission can strengthen its stakeholder engagement and commitment to JEDI principles. All responses to the survey will be kept confidential, and KH will only share tabulated results with the Commission. The survey was originally scheduled to be sent in late April or early May. Staff capacity issues have limited staff's ability to coordinate more timely with KH, though discussions are underway again.

***Pride Month***

Initially established as a single day to honor the anniversary of the Stonewall Uprising, the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer+ (LGBTQ+) Pride Month is an entire month dedicated to uplifting LGBTQ+ voices, celebrating LGBTQ+ culture, and supporting

## Staff Summary for June 19-20, 2024

LGBTQ+ rights. Throughout the month of June, nationwide, there have traditionally been parades, protests, drag performances, live theater and memorials and celebrations of life for members of the community who lost their lives to HIV/AIDS. The word 'pride' is an integral cultural concept within the LGBTQ+ community, representing solidarity, collectivity and identity, as well as resistance to discrimination and violence.

The California Natural Resources Agency has hosted multiple events for Pride Month in which Commission staff have participated. For example, in addition to a Pride march in Sacramento, Secretary Wade Crowfoot moderated an hour-long “thought-provoking discussion exploring diverse voices and histories that have formed California’s LGBTQ+ community.” Several participants are employees of departments within the agency and brought personal insight to their state employment experience. The session can be viewed on the agency YouTube page at <https://www.youtube.com/live/LvICYEz59XQ?si=Re5DdMiWbvYjOhVp>.

### *Immigrant Heritage Month*

The United States is a nation founded by immigration and recognizes the contributions of immigrants in an annual observance each June. National Immigration Heritage Month (NIHM) was first established by President George H. W. Bush, in June 1988 and is celebrated annually to “recognize the significant contributions of immigrants...and to promote the awareness of the diversity of the American people.” President Joe Biden’s proclamation on NIHM begins, “American is the only country in the world with a heart and soul that draws from old and new. We are home to people whose ancestors have been here for thousands of years and home to people from every place on Earth.” California is no different with a vast assemblage of immigrants from around the world. The full Biden proclamation can be accessed at [A Proclamation on National Immigrant Heritage Month](#).

### **Service Based Budgeting**

In 2019, the Department launched its Service-Based Budgeting (SBB) Initiative to identify tasks needed to accomplish its statutory responsibilities and fulfill its mission (“mission-level” data); the data collected would, in part, help inform future budget discussions and requests. As a sister agency whose budget is a line item within the Department’s, the Commission was included in the exercise. Initial efforts concentrated on identifying three key elements: All tasks necessary to accomplish the Commission’s mission, the appropriate types of staff skills (classifications) for each task, and the estimated time commitment from staff to complete each task.

Since completing the mission-level assessment, SBB has annually required a complete accounting of staff time allocated to each of the tasks. As staff engaged in and analyzed each annual reporting, it became clear that the list of tasks specified in the mission level information was incomplete and, in at least one case, a full personnel year was being incorrectly attributed to annual Commission work. This spring marked five years since SBB commenced and has offered the first opportunity to analyze the outcome of efforts, reevaluate included tasks, update the mission-level information, and correct inaccuracies or incomplete information. Staff has been engaging with the Department in the intensive mission level data “refresh” since early March. The project is an important opportunity to identify gaps at the Commission between the resources necessary to meet its statutory responsibilities and fulfill its mission, as opposed to the reality of the resources currently available.

## Staff Summary for June 19-20, 2024

### **Personnel**

For each Commission meeting, staff provides an update on its workload and activities of the previous two months; a few highlights are provided here, with additional details in Exhibit 2.

*Staff Vacancy Rate:* Commission staff experienced a 25% staff vacancy rate during the first quarter of the year for current positions — including the project lead for policy reviews, JEDI planning, SBB, and meeting preparations. Utilizing the vacant regulations analyst position, Cynthia McKeith returned to the Commission in May. The program manager and the tribal advisor and liaison positions remain vacant, or approximately 17% of current positions. The vacancies have resulted in a heavier workload for other staff, who are diligently juggling additional tasks from vacant positions on top of their own responsibilities. The pressure is compounded by the Commission’s deadline-driven environment, a larger than normal assemblage of rulemakings and projects, onboarding efforts, and the need for cross-training backups for critical tasks. Some tasks have been delayed until vacant positions are filled.

*Recruitment Efforts:* Currently, recruitment for two critical positions within the staff services manager classification are underway and advancing rapidly: interviews were conducted this month and offers are in process. The tribal advisor and liaison has been vacant, in part, due to the difficulty filling the position in the prior classification of senior environmental scientist. The program manager position has been vacant since April. For both recruitments, staff are moving quickly to finalize selections and plan to announce the addition of new team members soon.

### **California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Actions**

The Commission has delegated authority to its executive director to take actions necessary to comply with CEQA, guidelines generally implementing CEQA, and the Commission’s certified regulatory program approved under CEQA, including conducting — or causing to be conducted — initial studies and deciding whether to prepare draft environmental impact reports, negative declarations, mitigated negative declarations, or determinations of exemption. Since the April 2024 Commission meeting, your executive director determined three regulatory actions were exempt from CEQA:

- Klamath River spring Chinook salmon emergency;
- Ocean salmon auto-conformance; and
- 90-day extension of white sturgeon emergency regulations.

### **Significant Public Comments (N/A)**

### **Recommendation (N/A)**

### **Exhibits**

1. [Staff Time Allocation and Activities, dated June 14, 2024](#)

### **Motion (N/A)**

**California Fish and Game Commission**  
**Staff Time Allocation and Activities**  
*June 14, 2024*

This report identifies, for the months of April and May 2024, where California Fish and Game Commission staff (including limited term and temporary help) allocated its time in general activity categories, trends in staff time allocation, and examples of specific activities in which staff engaged.

**General Time Allocation**

Task Category	April Staff Time	May Staff Time
Regulatory Program	8%	13%
Non-Regulatory Programs	7%	4%
Commission and Committee Meetings	36%	17%
Legal Matters	2%	4%
External Affairs	5%	7%
Special Projects	5%	7%
Administration	19%	28%
Leave Time	3%	12%
Unfilled Positions <sup>1</sup>	20%	14%
Total Staff Time <sup>2</sup>	106%	104%

<sup>1</sup> *Unfilled positions are skewed downward due to contract and temporary help*

<sup>2</sup> *Total staff time is greater than 100% due to overtime*

**Trends**

Time allocations of note for the two-month period are *Commission and Committee Meetings*, *Administration*, and *Unfilled Positions*.

The *Commission and Committee Meetings* category is elevated during this reporting period, for both April and May. The hybrid format for Commission meetings requires all team members to assist, whether in person or remotely, while committee meetings require about half of the team. The April Commission meeting, a full, two-day meeting with travel, required nearly half of each staff members' time for the month. Time allocations for May is elevated due to the Commission's teleconference on May 15, 2024, in addition to a particularly full May Wildlife Resources Committee meeting.

In the *Administration* category, recruitment efforts for the multiple vacancies have dominated staff time and will continue to do so through June along with onboarding new staff. Training and onboarding existing staff in a new position (deputy executive director) and returning staff (staff services analyst) began in this period, while recruitments for the tribal advisor and liaison and the recently-vacated regulations program manager were ongoing. Additionally, both the five-year mission level reporting and current-level refresh for *service-based budgeting* are reflected.

*Unfilled Positions* remains high this period, though not fully represented by the time entries in the general time allocation table due to contract, limited term, and temporary help. Staff continue to make progress on filling the remaining vacancies with a sense of urgency.

### **Sample Activities for April 2024**

- Coordinated with the Department related to experimental fishing permit applications and requests
- Met with Department staff to discuss the marine protected area regulation petition binning process
- Welcomed back Cynthia Mckeith and commenced her onboarding
- Engaged in staff-led discussion about fast-fashion impacts on the environment and people to increase JEDI awareness as part of the monthly *Taking a Moment to Pause*
- Served as a resource for Ocean Protection Council's statewide initiative for a restoration and mitigation policy
- Provided feedback and discussed an external draft on offshore aquaculture permitting guidance
- Coordinated and facilitated individual conversations with state and federal agencies regarding the aquaculture leasing process and next steps to improve interagency coordination, including engagement in pre-application coordination meetings.
- Collaborated with a Scripps Institution of Oceanography graduate student regarding volunteer work with the Commission
- Coordinated with the chronic wasting disease task force
- Prepared for and conducted one publicly noticed meeting (Commission) and prepared for two publicly noticed meetings (Wildlife Resources Committee and Commission teleconference)

### **Sample Activities for May 2024**

- Visited Klamath River dam removal and restoration sites
- Engaged in staff-led discussion about improving outreach and inclusivity in outdoor hobbies, such as birding, to increase JEDI awareness as part of the monthly *Moment to Pause* effort
- Participated in a fishery disaster relief symposium hosted by Ocean Science Trust to learn about and consider potential solutions to fill in gaps related to disaster relief
- Attended a California Sea Grant state conference ; completed an equity training with the San Diego Regional Climate Collaborative; toured Port of San Diego's nature-based living shorelines
- Facilitated conversations with aquaculture leaseholders regarding lease requests
- Participated in discussions regarding improvements to the service-based budgeting task validation process and initiated the mission-level refresh for Commission tasks

- Attended California Ocean Day and engaged in discussions with other state agency and nongovernmental organization representatives Attended a fishermen’s working group meeting related to offshore wind development off California
- Prepared for and conducted two publicly noticed meetings (Wildlife Resources Committee and Commission teleconference) and prepared for one publicly noticed meeting (June Commission meeting).

## **Sample Tasks for the General Allocation Categories**

### ***Regulatory Program***

- Coordination meetings with DFW to
  - develop timetables and notices
- Prepare and file notices, re-notices, and initial/final statements of reasons
- Prepare administrative records
- Track and respond to public comments
- Consult, research, and respond to inquiries from the Office of Administrative Law
- Facilitate CEQA document review, certification of findings, and filing with state clearinghouse

### ***Non-Regulatory Program***

- DFW partnership, including jointly developing management plans and concepts
- Process and analyze non-regulatory requests
- Develop, review, and amend Commission policies
- Research and review adaptive management practices
- Review and process CESA petitions

### ***Commission and Committee Meetings and Support***

- Research and compile subject-specific information
- Develop and distribute meeting agendas and materials
- Agenda and debrief meetings
- Prepare meeting summaries, audio files, and voting records
- Develop and distribute after-meeting memos/letters
- Conduct onsite meeting management
- Process submitted meeting materials
- Provide commissioner support
- Process and analyze regulation change petitions

### ***Legal Matters***

- Public Records Act requests
- California Law Review Commission
- Process appeals and accusations
- Respond to litigation
- Process kelp and state water bottom leases
- Prepare administrative records

### ***External Affairs***

- Engage and educate legislators, monitor legislation
- Maintain state, federal, and tribal government relations
- Correspondence
- Respond to public inquiries
- Website maintenance
- Coyote workshops

### ***Special Projects***

- Coastal Fishing Communities

### ***Administration***

- Staff training and development
- Purchases and payments
- Contract management
- Personnel management

### ***Leave Time***

- Holidays
- Sick
- Vacation or annual leave

- Streamline routine regulatory actions

- Budget development and tracking
- Health and safety oversight
- Internal processes and procedures
- Document archival

- Jury duty
- Bereavement
- Administrative time off