



FERC COMMITTEE MEETING AGENDA

1 p.m. Thursday, May 22, 2025
Utica Headquarters | 1168 Booster Way, Angels Camp, CA 95222

View the meeting agenda packet: www.uticawater.com/board-of-directors/board-meeting-agendas-and-minutes

UTICA FERC COMMITTEE

Caroline Schirato, Chair
Gary Conrado, Director

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Agenda Items

1. Call to Order / Pledge of Allegiance

- Chair Schirato presided over the meeting. The meeting was called to order at 1:02 p.m.

2. Roll Call

- **Directors Present**
 - Directo Schirato
 - Director Conrado
- **Utica Staff Present**
 - Joel Metzger, General Manager
 - Stacie Walker, Administrative Specialist
- **Others Present**
 - Michael Manwaring, Stantec Consultant (virtual)

- Pam Caronongan, COA Administrator (virtual)

3. **Public Comment**

- None

4. **New Business**

A. Approval of minutes from the March 5, 2025, FERC Committee Meeting.

- Director Conrado moved to approve the FERC Committee minutes as presented, Director Schirato agreed and seconded. The minutes were approved as presented.

B. Discussion / direction regarding the plan and schedule for Utica's Final FERC Conduit Exemption Application and Surrender Application.

(Joel Metzger, General Manager)

Mr. Metzger told the committee that they will review proposals from Mr. Mike Manwaring from Stantec, followed by an update from SWCA on the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) field inventory work.

Mr. Manwaring discussed the 401 Water Quality Certification (401 QC) application, which will be completed by the biologist who collected samples. He estimated the cost at \$15,000 and noted that although the August 2025 completion date is conservative, the overlapping nature of tasks could lead to earlier completion. He explained the 180-day review window begins only when the application is deemed complete by the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB), and if rejected, a new 180-day cycle would start. There was also discussion about involving Utica staff in early drafting, though concerns were raised about losing efficiency. Mr. Manwaring confirmed the timing aligns with the July 2025 submission of the Conduit Exemption and Project Surrender applications. Mr. Metzger requested Stantec to finalize June billing to assist with budget planning and informed the committee that consultant costs relating to the Exemption have exceeded the board-approved budget by \$60,000.

Mr. Manwaring explained there are 21 areas of study required by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), even though some are not applicable, all sections must be addressed in the report. Stantec will use templates and existing data to streamline the process. The public draft will be posted online, in the office, and in a newspaper notice for comment once finalized by the Board of Directors. Task 4, which covers public comment and final revisions, was not scoped due to low expected feedback.

The committee discussed the cost of Stantec completing the CEQA noting that the cost was reduced from \$150,000 to \$80,000. Mr. Metzger noted that due to Stantec's familiarity with the site, no other firm is likely to complete the work for less. Additional studies may be requested by FERC or agencies such as California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), SHPO, and tribal governments. The committee asked if there will be future requests from resource agencies. Mr. Metzger said it's unlikely, however, it is possible Utica may need to engage in a study to support current conditions. Using CDFW as an example, they have asked Utica to commit to ongoing frog and fish monitoring – any surveys committed to by Utica would be outlined in a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA). The Committee acknowledged that fulfilling every agency request could increase water costs for ratepayers.

Mr. Metzger said the final SWCA cultural resources document will be 100–120 pages, with a draft expected in about three weeks, ideally by the first week of June. The full cultural update is expected by early August. If needed, they may proceed with submission before the cultural work is finalized, since tribal and SHPO reviews often take less than 30 days.

Metzger is still clarifying whether the non-federally recognized Mi-Wuk tribe can access the cultural materials. SHPO says yes, but the federally recognized tribe says no. Since SHPO gives weight to the non-federal tribe's concerns, this could complicate the process. State officials have been advised to approach tribal matters with heightened sensitivity.

COMMITTEE DIRECTION:

Present Stantec proposal to the Full Utica Board of Directors.

5. Upcoming Meetings and Calendar Events

- A. Discuss potential dates for the next FERC Committee meeting.

6. Adjournment

- With no further business the meeting was adjourned at 1:59 p.m.

Utica Mission Statement

We are committed to preserving and protecting local control of our water resources through effective fiscal and operational management and assuring a safe and reliable water supply for municipal and agricultural stakeholders, while ensuring the quality and quantity of this precious resource for generations to come.

Americans With Disabilities Act

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Questions?

Contact Utica at admin@uticawater.com or (209) 736-9419.

Approved at the June 18, 2025, Special FERC Committee Meeting:



Caroline Schirato (Jun 18, 2025 20:09 PDT)

Caroline Schirato, Chair

Attest:



Stacie Walker, Clerk of Board

05.22.25 FERC Committee Minutes (SW)

Final Audit Report

2025-06-19

Created:	2025-06-18
By:	Utica Water and Power Authority (admin@uticawater.com)
Status:	Signed
Transaction ID:	CBJCHBCAABAApoNYrBBv4c2-fqcdWnkkH26Wlu5aWdml

"05.22.25 FERC Committee Minutes (SW)" History

-  Document created by Utica Water and Power Authority (admin@uticawater.com)
2025-06-18 - 11:29:53 PM GMT
-  Document emailed to Caroline Schirato (carolineschirato@angelscamp.gov) for signature
2025-06-18 - 11:29:57 PM GMT
-  Email viewed by Caroline Schirato (carolineschirato@angelscamp.gov)
2025-06-19 - 3:08:41 AM GMT
-  Document e-signed by Caroline Schirato (carolineschirato@angelscamp.gov)
Signature Date: 2025-06-19 - 3:09:14 AM GMT - Time Source: server
-  Agreement completed.
2025-06-19 - 3:09:14 AM GMT