

From: [Clerk of the Board](#)
To: [Stephanie Simunic](#)
Subject: FW: Concerns Regarding Item 4.2 on Today's Agenda
Date: Tuesday, July 21, 2026 9:32:59 AM
Attachments: [Screen Shot 2022-04-26 at 9.41.42 AM.png](#)

From: Stone, Greer <Greer.Stone@paltoalto.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2026 8:39 AM
To: Shiloh Ballard <SBallard@valleywater.org>; Clerk of the Board <clerkoftheboard@valleywater.org>; Nai Hsueh <NHsueh@valleywater.org>; Tony Estremera <TEstremera@valleywater.org>
Cc: Margaret Bruce <mbruce@sfcjpa.org>
Subject: Concerns Regarding Item 4.2 on Today's Agenda

Dear Members of the Board Policy and Monitoring Committee,

I am writing to express my concern regarding the proposed revisions to Valley Water's Governance Policy GP-9.3 governing Board member representation on external committees.

The SFCJPA exists because no single agency can solve the flood risks facing the San Francisquito Creek watershed alone. Our success depends on trust, collaboration, and the ability of each member agency's representative to fully participate in deliberations and make decisions on behalf of their agency at the Board table. Over more than two decades, this governance model has enabled the partnership to complete major flood protection investments and continue advancing the Reach 2 Project for the benefit of residents in Palo Alto, East Palo Alto, Menlo Park, and the broader region. The proposed policy changes would fundamentally alter how that partnership functions.

Under the proposal, Valley Water's representative would be required to seek direction from the full Valley Water Board before voting on matters involving project progress, financial commitments, or organizational issues. While I appreciate the desire to ensure adequate communication between Valley Water staff, its Board, and its representatives, the practical effect is likely to be significant delays in the SFCJPA's decision-making process.

As elected officials, we all understand the realities of public governance. Requiring matters to be referred back to another governing body before action can be taken will certainly slow our progress. It introduces additional agendas, additional meetings, additional scheduling constraints, and additional opportunities for delay. For a project as complex and time-sensitive as Reach 2, those delays can quickly compound.

Our Board has worked diligently over the past several years to build momentum toward selecting a preferred alternative, securing funding, completing environmental review, and ultimately delivering long-awaited flood protection to our shared constituents. The communities along San Francisquito Creek have already waited decades for this project. They deserve a governance structure that enables timely decision-making rather than one that introduces new procedural hurdles.

I am also concerned about the precedent this policy could establish for the partnership itself. The SFCJPA was intentionally structured so that each member agency appoints a representative empowered to deliberate, negotiate, and vote in real time with the other Directors. That dynamic has been essential to building consensus across five independent public agencies. If one representative must routinely defer action pending approval from another governing body, it changes the nature of those discussions and makes it considerably more difficult for the Board to efficiently conduct its business. Practically speaking, it could force the SFCJPA to proceed with votes while Valley Water's representative abstains pending Board direction, an outcome I am confident was never the intent of this proposal.

This is not simply an internal Valley Water governance matter; because Valley Water is one of five equal partners in the SFCJPA, changes that affect the JPA and flexibility of its representative inevitably affect the effectiveness of the organization as a whole. If Valley Water believes certain categories of decisions warrant broader review, I believe those conversations should occur collaboratively among all five member agencies through the established governance framework of the JPA. That approach would preserve the partnership that has served our agencies well while ensuring that any changes are considered transparently and with input from every member entity.

Reach 2 represents one of the most significant flood protection investments our communities will make in a generation. Our collective focus should remain on moving the project forward efficiently and collaboratively so we can finally provide the level of flood protection our residents deserve.

I respectfully urge the Committee to carefully consider the broader implications of the proposed policy on the governance of the SFCJPA and on our shared ability to deliver this critical public safety project in a timely manner.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Greer Stone
Chair, San Francisquito Creek Joint Powers Authority
Vice Mayor, City of Palo Alto

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