

FEE EXEMPT

1 SCOTT S. SLATER (State Bar No. 117317)

sslater@bhfs.com

2 BRADLEY J. HERREMA (State Bar No. 228976)

bherrema@bhfs.com

3 LAURA K. YRACEBURU (State Bar No. 333085)

lyraceburu@bhfs.com

4 **BROWNSTEIN HYATT FARBER SCHRECK, LLP**

1021 Anacapa Street, 2nd Floor

Santa Barbara, CA 93101-2102

Telephone: 805.963.7000

6 Facsimile: 805.965.4333

7 Attorneys for

CHINO BASIN WATERMASTER

9 SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

10 FOR THE COUNTY OF SAN BERNARDINO

11 CHINO BASIN MUNICIPAL WATER
12 DISTRICT,

13 Plaintiff,

14 v.

15 CITY OF CHINO, ET AL.,

16 Defendants.

Case No. RCV RS 51010

[Assigned for All Purposes to the
Honorable Stanford E. Reichert]

NOTICE OF ORDER

BROWNSTEIN HYATT FARBER SCHRECK, LLP
1021 Anacapa Street, 2nd Floor
Santa Barbara, CA 93101-2711

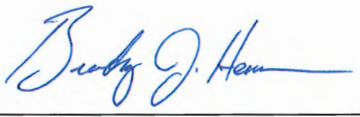
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TO ALL PARTIES AND THEIR ATTORNEYS OF RECORD:

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that, on April 22, 2022, the Honorable Stanford E. Reichert, having considered the briefing submitted and all supporting documents filed concurrently therewith, and having heard any oral argument from counsel, entered its ORDER and RULINGS re City of Chino Motion and Corrected Motion for Reimbursement of Attorney Fees and Expenses Paid to the Agricultural Pool, a copy of which is attached to this Notice as **Exhibit A**.

Dated: April 27, 2022

BROWNSTEIN HYATT FARBER
SCHRECK, LLP

By: 
SCOTT S. SLATER
BRADLEY J. HERREMA
LAURA K. YRACEBURU
Attorneys for
CHINO BASIN WATERMASTER

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FILED
SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA
COUNTY OF SAN BERNARDINO
SAN BERNARDINO DISTRICT

APR 22 2022

BY Kimberly Behan
KIMBERLY BEHAN, DEPUTY

SUPERIOR COURT FOR THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA
FOR THE COUNTY OF SAN BERNARDINO

CHINO BASIN MUNICIPAL WATER)
DISTRICT,)
Plaintiff,)
vs.)
CITY OF CHINO, et al.,)
Defendants)

CASE NO. RCV 51010

ORDER and RULINGS re City of Chino
Motion and Corrected Motion for
Reimbursement of Attorney Fees and
Expenses Paid to the Agricultural Pool

Date: April 22, 2022
Time: 1:30 pm
Department: S35

I. RULING: For the reasons set forth herein, the court denies the City of Chino (Chino) motion and corrected motion for reimbursement of attorney fees and expenses paid to the Agricultural Pool. In short, the court finds that the Terms of Agreement settlement is valid, binding on all App Pool members, and resolves all issues of Chino's motion and corrected motion.

II. Documents reviewed: Miscellaneous rulings

A. Motion and responses

1. Dated December 31, 2021, City of Chino (Chino) motion for reimbursement of attorney fees and expenses paid to the Agricultural Pool (AgPool) and the corrected motion also dated December 31, 2021.

1 2. Dated January 24, 2022, Watermaster's response to Chino corrected
2 motion, including declaration of Joseph Joswiak.

3 3. Dated January 24, 2022, Appropriative Pool (App Pool) response to
4 Chino corrected motion.

5 4. Dated January 24, 2022, AgPool opposition to Chino's corrected
6 motion; declaration of Tracy Egoscue in support.

7 5. Dated January 28, 2022, Chino reply to AgPool opposition

8 B. Joinders in Chino motion

9 1. Dated January 6, 2022, Monte Vista Water District and Monte Vista
10 Irrigation Company.

11 a. Dated January 24, 2022, AgPool opposition.

12 i. AgPool argues the Monte Vista Water District and Monte Vista
13 Irrigation Company joinder was untimely and provided no additional
14 evidence or argument.

15 (a) Dated January 24, 2022, State of California (AgPool member)
16 joinder in AgPool opposition to the joinder by Monte Vista
17 Water District and Monte Vista Irrigation Company.

18 (1) RULING: State of California joinder granted

19 ii. RULING: The court grants the joinder of Monte Vista Water
20 District and Monte Vista Irrigation Company.

21 2. Dated January 10, 2022, City of Ontario (Ontario) joinder in Chino
22 motion.

23 a. Ontario's joinder seeks:

24 i. Ontario's share of \$61,132 of the \$300,000 assessed and paid for
25 AgPool attorney fees and expenses for fiscal year 2019-20;

26 ii. Ontario's share of \$63,314 assessed and paid for AgPool special
27 projects for fiscal year 2019-20 that was transferred by Watermaster
28 to the AgPool's legal budget to pay for AgPool attorney fees and

1 expenses for fiscal year 2019-20 as calculated by Watermaster;
2 iii. Reimbursement from AgPool for \$102,557 to Watermaster's
3 administrative reserve funds that were used to pay AgPool's legal
4 expenses for fiscal year 2020-21.

5 b. Dated January 24, 2022, AgPool objection and opposition to Ontario's
6 joinder

7 i. Aside from the appellate stay argument, the AgPool argues that the
8 joinder was untimely and seeks different relief than that of Chino.
9 The AgPool incorporates as arguments from its opposition to
10 Chino's corrected motion.

11 c. Dated January 28, 2022, Ontario's reply:

12 i. Ontario argues there has been no waiver and the AgPool cannot
13 establish the elements of estoppel.

14 d. RULING: The court grants the joinder. The court will address the
15 substantive issues below.

16 3. Dated January 24, 2022, State of California (California) joinder in
17 AgPool's opposition to the Monte Vista Water District and Monte Vista
18 Irrigation Company joinder in Chino's corrected motion

19 a. RULING: The court grants the joinder.

20 4. Dated January 24, 2022, California joinder in AgPool's opposition to
21 Chino's corrected motion.

22 a. RULING: The court grants the joinder.

23 C. Contested settlement documents

24 1. Dated March 24, 2022, AgPool and App Pool joint statement regarding
25 their settlement

26 2. Dated April 1, 2011, Ontario, Chino, Monte Vista Water District and
27 Monte Vista Irrigation Company (the parties/dissenters) rebuttal brief and
28 objections re joint statement including declaration of Scott Burton and

1 declaration of Jimmy Gutierrez

2 3. Dated April 6, 2022, Watermaster limited response to rebuttal brief and
3 objection re joint statement, etc., including declaration of Peter Kavounas

4 4. Dated April 14, 2022, the parties/dissenters' surrebuttal to
5 Watermaster's limited response

6 5. Dated April 18, 2022, Watermaster response to the parties/dissenters'
7 surrebuttal to Watermaster's limited response.

8 6. Dated April 14, 2022, App Pool's surrebuttal to rebuttal and objections
9 re settlement including declarations of John Bosler, Chris Diggs, and John
10 Schatz

11 7. Dated April 14, 2022, AgPool's surrebuttal to rebuttal brief and
12 objections re: joint statement including declaration of Tracey Egoscue

13 8. Dated April 18, 2022, the parties reply to App Pool and AgPool
14 surrebuttals including declarations of D. Crosley, A. Robles, and S. Burton

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17 III. Chino motion--Summary/Analysis

18 A. On behalf of the Appropriative Pool (App Pool), Chino seeks reimbursement
19 of the assessments to the App Pool for the AgPool's attorney fees and expenses
20 totaling \$483,202.55 for fiscal years 2019-20 and 2020-21.

21 B. Also on behalf App Pool, Chino seeks reimbursement of assessments to
22 Watermaster \$102,557.12, or, in the alternative, to order Watermaster to refrain from
23 seeking the collection of \$102,557.12 from the App Pool members including Chino.

24 1. The \$102,557.12 is what Watermaster paid to the AgPool from
25 Watermaster reserve funds for which Watermaster seeks reimbursement
26 from either the App Pool or the AgPool.

27 2. The court notes that Watermaster has released the escrow funds,
28 according to the AgPool's opposition to Chino's original motion, dated

1 January 24, page 8.

2 C. Chino argues that the AgPool 1) never showed any invoices that 2)
3 demonstrate that the AgPool's legal services were of benefit to the App Pool or at
4 least not adverse to the App Pool.

5 1. For fiscal year 2019-20, the App Pool submitted a \$300,000 budget for
6 legal services. There was no specification for the amount payable by each
7 App Pool member.

8 a. Page 5 of Chino's motion and page 5 of Chino's corrected motion has a
9 breakdown of the contribution of each App Pool member for the
10 \$300,000.

11 b. On December 13, 2019, Chino paid \$447,841.58 for its total
12 Watermaster assessment for fiscal year 2019-20, which included Chino's
13 portion of the App Pool \$300,000 legal budget. According to page 6, line
14 1, Chino paid \$16,379 as its portion of the 2019-20 AgPool \$300,000 legal
15 budget.

16 c. Later in fiscal year 2019-20, the AgPool increased its 2019-20 legal
17 services expenditures or budget by \$229,008.75. Watermaster then
18 transferred \$63,314 from the AgPool special projects fund (8471) into the
19 AgPool legal fund (8467) and invoicing the difference of \$165,694.75 to
20 the App Pool.

21 i. In response, some App Pool members deposited their allocated
22 amounts totaling \$161,070.09 into an escrow account held by
23 Watermaster.

24 ii. Marygold, Norco, SAWC and WVWD up paid a total of \$4624.66
25 directly to Watermaster.

26 iii. At the hearing on November 5, 2021, Watermaster agreed to return
27 the \$161,070.09 to the App Pool members whose deposits made up
28 that amount. The court did not address the \$4624.66 owed to the 4

1 appropriators.

2 d. So the total fiscal year 2019-20 amount looks to the court like the
3 amount set forth on page 6 on the corrected motion:

4 \$300,000	5 Paid for the 2019-20 AgPool legal services budget
6 \$63,314	7 Transferred from the AgPool special projects 8 fund (8471) to the AgPool legal fund (8467)
9 \$4624.66	10 Made by the 4 members of the App Pool to 11 Watermaster
12 Total: \$367,938.66	

13 e. Ontario's joinder contained this chart of AgPool legal expenses for
14 fiscal year 2019-20 (amounts rounded to the nearest dollar):

15 AgPool 16 legal 17 expense 18 budget	19 Assessmen 20 ts issued 21 by 22 Watermast 23 er for Ag 24 legal 25 expenses	26 Payments 27 made for Ag 28 legal expenses	Ontario's share of payments made	Explanation of Ontario's share of payments made
\$300,000 Initial budget	\$300,000	\$300,000	\$61,132	Ontario paid these assessments to Watermaster Watermaster did not separately itemize the \$300,000 on assessment invoices; the motion calculates share using

				information from Watermaster
\$229,008 Retroactive legal budget increases, formally objected to by App Pool	N/A	\$63,314 Transferred by Watermaster from AgPool special projects fund to AG pool legal budget	Watermaster should provide Ontario's share	AgPool special projects fund is funded by Watermaster assessments on App Pool members, including Ontario
	\$165,000	\$4625 \$161,070 Paid into escrow by App Pool members	\$0.00	Ontario paid its share of these additional assessments into escrow: funds in escrow were addressed by the December 3, 2021 court order

2. For fiscal year 2020-21 the AgPool submitted a \$500,000 budget for legal services. Watermaster allocated the \$500,000 budget to App Pool members and invoiced each member.
- a. Additionally, for fiscal year 2020-21, Watermaster paid \$102,557.12 for AgPool legal expenses from Watermaster administrator reserve funds, for which Chino now seeks reimbursement on behalf of Watermaster.
- i. Chino argues that the App Pool is not obligated to refund the \$102,557.12 because the AgPool 1) never showed any invoices that

1 2) demonstrate that the AgPool's legal services were of benefit to
2 the App Pool or at least not adverse to the App Pool. [This is the
3 same argument Chino uses generally.]

4 ii. Some App Pool members refused to pay the Watermaster
5 assessment for the \$500,000 budget, others paid.

6 iii. Pages 7-8 -of the original and corrected motions have a breakdown
7 of the contribution of each App Pool member to the \$500,000
8 AgPool budget, showing a total of \$115,263.89. Chino again makes
9 its general argument that it is not obligated to pay the AgPool legal
10 expenses.

11 iv. The reimbursement claim for fiscal year 2020-21 is \$115,263.89
12 representing the total amount the 11 App Pool members paid for
13 legal services to the AgPool.

14 b. Chino also cites the court's May 28, 2021 order and as the basis for its
15 motion, and argues that the AgPool has waived its right to the fees due to
16 its failure to comply with the court's May 28, 2021 order.

17 3. Chino's total amount claimed breaks down as follows:

18		
19	\$300,000	Fiscal year 2019-20 AgPool legal budget
20	\$63,314	Fiscal year 2019-20: Transferred from special projects 21 fund (8471) to AG pool legal budget/fund (8467)
22	\$4624.66	Fiscal year 2019-20: paid by 4 App Pool members 23 directly to Watermaster
24	\$115,263.89	Fiscal year 2020-2021: paid by 11 App Pool members 25 for the AgPool legal budget.
26	Total: \$483,202.55	
27	Additionally, for fiscal year 2020-21, on behalf of Watermaster, Chino seeks	
28	the \$102,557.12 which Watermaster paid for AgPool legal expenses from Watermaster administrator reserve funds	

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2 4. Ontario's joinder, has the following chart for AgPool Legal expenses
3 for fiscal year 2020-21 rounded to the nearest dollar:

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AgPool legal expense budget	Assessments issued by Watermaster	Payments made for Ag legal expenses	Ontario's share of payments made	Explanation of Ontario's share of payments made
\$500,000 Initial budget	\$500,000	\$115,264	\$0.00	Watermaster separately itemized the \$500,000 on assessment invoices; Ontario - withheld payment pending resolution of the dispute
		\$102,557 Watermaster used funds from Watermaster's administrative reserves (Ontario seeks this amount in repayment)	Uncertain	Watermaster has indicated that it will look to the AgPool or App Pool to repay the transferred funds; Watermaster administrative reserves are funded by assessments on the App Pool and Nonagricultural Pool, but not the AgPool

23 D. Ontario's initial motion filing on September 13, 2020, page 10, has the
24 following chronology based on the declaration of Scott Burton and the request for
25 judicial notice.

- 26 1. The Storage Contests challenge applications for Local Storage
27 Agreements submitted by certain members of the App Pool. Initially the
28 AgPool opposed approval of the applications asserting that the Safe Yield

1 reset was pending and water in storage accounts exceeds the safe storage
2 capacity of the Basin which the AgPool argued would cause a material
3 physical injury to the Basin. The Storage Contests were consolidated for
4 hearing and assigned to Mr. Kurt Berchtold as the Hearing Officer.

5 2. The AgPool incurred significant legal and expert expenses to prosecute
6 the Storage Contests against certain App Pool members contributing to an
7 overrun of the AgPool's Watermaster approved budget for the present Fiscal
8 Year 2019-20. The overrun resulted in the AgPool's then recent request to
9 Watermaster for a budget increase and transfer to cover unpaid legal and
10 other expenses of the AgPool.

11 a. The AgPool requested this increase for its Fiscal Year 2020-21 for legal
12 expenses upward from the previously approved amount of \$300,000 to
13 \$500,000. Burton concludes that this increase request reflected the
14 AgPool's "intent to continue with the same conduct resulting in excessive
15 charges to the App Pool."

16 3. Despite resolution of the Pools' 2009 dispute the AgPool has continued
17 to assert an unreasonably broad interpretation of Section 5.4(a) in connection
18 with the present dispute. Specifically the AgPool asserts that the App Pool
19 must pay all legal and expert expenses incurred by the AgPool for any
20 purpose whatsoever. The AgPool also takes the position that redacted details
21 of the expenses need not be revealed to the payor, *i.e.*, the App Pool because
22 of attorney-client privilege.

23 a. The court again notes that the resolution of the 2009 dispute is
24 irrelevant to the instant motion and ruling.

25 4. On June 30, 2020 the AgPool took action demanding that the App Pool
26 pay the AgPool's unbudgeted legal and expert expenses in the amount of
27 approximately \$167,000. According to the AgPool pursuant to the terms of
28 the Peace Agreement, Section 5.4(a), all assessments and expenses of the

1 AgPool shall be paid by the App Pool. The AgPool further demands that
2 Watermaster amend the AgPool budget as appropriate and necessary to
3 cover all pending invoices.

4 5. Objecting to the unbudgeted legal and expert expenses and the overrun
5 and without any detail regarding the basis of such fees and expenses App
6 Pool members asked Watermaster to provide the appropriately redacted
7 supporting documentation and objected to Watermaster's payment of the
8 AgPool's invoices until the App Pool had an opportunity to review the
9 information. Watermaster responded that it treats AgPool legal invoices as
10 attorney-client privileged communications and as such Watermaster neither
11 reviews AgPool legal invoices nor would it release the invoices (redacted or
12 otherwise) to the payor of said invoices (i.e. the App Pool).

13 6. The App Pool members then directed their request for appropriately
14 redacted invoices to the AgPool. The chairman of the AgPool Committee
15 responded on the AgPool's behalf. His letter stated that the AgPool will not
16 provide the redacted invoices and that if the App Pool does not pay its
17 expenses then the AgPool will sue the App Pool members. On September
18 10, 2020, the Watermaster acknowledged during an App Pool meeting that
19 the AgPool provided no hackup for its claimed expenses and Watermaster
20 did not ask for any. Thus the App Pool has been denied any opportunity to
21 review the basis of the expenses being passed on to determine whether the
22 expenses are appropriate as contemplated under Section 5.4(a).

23 7. On August 25, 2020 the Watermaster Board voted to issue invoices to
24 the App Pool for the \$165,694.75 that the Ag Pool incurred in legal and
25 expert fees in excess of its budget. The AgPool's response to the App Pool
26 and the resulting Watermaster-issued invoice necessitated the App Pool
27 members' instant motion.

28 IV. Watermaster response to Chino corrected motion--Summary/Analysis

1 A. The purpose of Watermaster's filing is to provide the court with an accurate
2 statement of facts regarding Watermaster's accounting for the funds at issue.

3 B. On December 7, 2021, Watermaster issued a refund for \$161,070.90 to 15
4 members of the App Pool.

5 C. From July 2022 December 2020, Watermaster paid \$217,821 to the AgPool
6 legal counsel only after receipt of the necessary information as to the invoices to be
7 paid and direction from the AgPool chair. \$102,557.12 is the difference between the
8 \$217,821 paid to AgPool legal counsel and \$115,263.88 collected from the
9 November 19, 2020, assessment invoices paid by the App Pool.

10 D. Watermaster expects that Watermaster's administrative reserve funds will be
11 refunded \$102,557.12, paid from Watermaster administrative reserve funds for
12 AgPool attorney fees and expenses for fiscal year 2020-21. The funding may come
13 from either the App Pool or the AgPool, depending upon the court's ruling. (As
14 noted, the refund has been made.)

15 E. Regarding the \$63,314:

16 1. In fiscal year 2019-20, when the AgPool increased its 2019-20 legal
17 services expenditures budget by \$229,008.75, Watermaster did *not* transfer
18 \$63,314 from the AgPool special projects fund (8471) into the AgPool legal
19 fund (8467). The AgPool controls both these accounts and directed this
20 transfer, but with the \$63,314 being spent on legal expenses during fiscal year
21 2019-20.

22 F. Regarding the \$161,070.09 deposited into the escrow account, and the
23 \$4624.66 paid in fiscal year 2019-20:

24 1. The App Pool paid \$161,070.09 and \$4624.66 to Watermaster and from
25 there into AgPool funds.

26 2. 15 parties gave instructions to place the funds in escrow, but 4 did not
27 (totaling \$4624.66). App Pool gave clear instructions that the parties needed
28 to indicate whether they wanted funds deposited to escrow or whether they

1 wanted the funds deposited directly into AgPool funds.

2 V. App Pool response to Chino motion--Summary/Analysis

3 A. The App Pool supports Chino's motion.

4 VI. AgPool opposition¹--Summary/Analysis

5 A. The AgPool argues that

6 1. Chino seeks reimbursements that exceed the court's May 28, 2021, and
7 December 21, 2021, orders.

8 a. The AgPool points out that the only support for this proposition is
9 Chino's opposition to the AgPool's original motion filed September 17,
10 2020 and the App Pool's opposition thereto.

11 i. Chino is inappropriately attempting to reach back in time to recoup
12 assessments not in issue.

13 2. Chino has not appropriately pled the reimbursement process for the
14 \$4624.66 paid by the 4 App Pool members.

15 3. Chino has waived any right to payments it approved and authorized
16 prior to the dispute and is estopped from claiming reimbursement.

17 a. The AgPool points to paragraph seven of the court's order filed May
18 28, 2021. In that order, the court noted that the court concluded the
19 AgPool and the App Pool had been agreeing to a determination about
20 payments of "litigation expense." Furthermore, the court stated "now that
21 the dispute has arisen, the procedure should include the AgPool providing
22 the Appropriate Pool with the AgPool's attorney fee bills."

23 4. Chino first objected to the AgPool's expenses in August 2020, which
24 was after the Appropriate Pool authorized the \$300,000 for the budget of
25 fiscal year 2019-20.

26 a. In Ontario's motion filed September 13, 2020, memorandum of points
27 and authorities, page 10, line 20, Ontario notes that "on June 30, 2020, the
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¹ With the AgPool's abandonment of its appeal, the court will not address that issue.

1 AgPool took action demanding that the App Pool pay the AgPool's legal
2 and expert expenses in the amount of approximately \$167,000."

3 i. The court concludes that was about then that the legal basis started
4 to take shape for the AgPool's attorney fee motion filed August 2,
5 2021 under the Peace I Agreement, paragraph §5.4(a). It is that
6 motion that started the legal basis and procedure upon which the
7 court is ruling in the instant order.

8 5. The AgPool also points out paragraph 5 of the court's May 28, 2021
9 order in which the court states "the ruling of the court on the instant motion
10 for attorney fees is intended to apply only to the specific attorney fee dispute
11 between the AgPool and the App Pool. It is not intended to have any
12 general effect on any other party or pool, or to give the App Pool any legal
13 basis to object to any other aspect or any other budget item."

14 6. The AgPool also points out the order paragraph 8.C.II. which states:
15 If the AgPool does not file its motion on or before July 25, 2021, as
16 ordered, then the court will consider the AgPool to have waived its
17 current claims for attorney fees and expenses, and the court will order
18 vacated the assessments subject to the current dispute reimbursed to
19 the paying party.

20 (a) The court notes exhibit A to the declaration of John Schatz filed
21 May 24, 2021, "Appropriative Pool Special Assessment of
22 \$165,694.75" which appears to the court to itemize the
23 assessments to App Pool members, and the court would use that
24 list as the basis of the reimbursements.

25 7. The AgPool also argues that Chino waived its right to repayments for
26 the 2019-20 fiscal year budget because the payment issue for that fiscal year
27 has been concluded and therefore cannot be litigated in the instant motion.
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1 VII. Chino reply--Summary/Analysis²

2 A. Chino argues that its motion targets reimbursement for the payments made by
3 the App Pool for fiscal years 2019-20 and 2020-21 because the AgPool did not
4 produce invoices for those years.

5 B. Chino also argues that the AgPool has failed to establish any right to retain the
6 payments of the App Pool members.

7 C. Chino also argues that the AgPool failure to produce the invoices denies
8 fundamental fairness and due process to pay the AgPool expenses under Peace
9 Agreement paragraph 5.4(a).

10 D. Chino also argues to refute the AgPool position that the prior orders of the
11 court do not require the AgPool to reimburse App Pool members beyond the funds
12 in escrow.

13 1. Chino points out that the court's May 28 order refers to the Schatz
14 declaration about the special assessments of \$165,000 that the court would
15 consider for reimbursement, but the order does not set a limit on what
16 payments are reversible.

17 2. Chino argues that paragraph 7 of the May 28 order does not make a
18 statement about reimbursement or preclude reimbursement for a particular
19 period.

20 3. Chino argues that paragraph 5 of the May 28 order does not limit the
21 scope of the App Pool reimbursement motion to \$165,694.75.

22 a. Chino argues that this limitation would frustrate the courts purpose in
23 authorizing Chino to bring its motion for reimbursement.

24 b. Chino points out that the court asked Mr. Gutierrez, Chino's attorney,
25 to address any money that somehow got paid that is not in escrow.

26 [Transcript page 33:1-6.]

27 4. Chino argues that the court did not limit its motion to \$4624.66.
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² Again, because the AgPool abandoned its appeal, the court will not address Chino's arguments regarding the state.

1 5. Chino argues that there is no evidence to support waiver or estoppel
2 because Chino's December 13, 2019 payment of Watermaster's 2019-20 total
3 invoice for \$447,841. The invoice did not show the portion attributable to
4 the AgPool's special project in legal expenses.

5 a. Chino further argues that the payment of the 2019-20 Watermaster is
6 not a basis for estoppel.
7

8 VIII. Joint statement regarding settlement between App Pool and AgPool regarding
9 Peace Agreement paragraph 5.4(a)--Summary/Analysis

10 A. Chino's motion was originally scheduled for hearing on February 4, 2022. It
11 was continued to April 8, due to the parties telling the court that settlement
12 negotiations were underway. Then on April 8, upon being told that there were
13 objections to the settlement, the court continued the hearing to April 22.

14 B. Dated March 24, 2022, Tracy Egoscue, attorney for the AgPool, and John
15 Schatz, attorney for the App Pool, submitted the joint statement regarding
16 settlement. The joint statement contains "terms of agreement (TOA)." App Pool
17 Chair Eduardo Espinoza signed the agreement on 3/22/22, and AgPool Chair
18 Robert Feenstra signed the agreement on 3/18/22. There were no other signatories
19 to the agreement.

20 IX. Rebuttal brief and objections re: joint statement regarding settlement between
21 App Pool and AgPool including declarations of Scott Burton and Jimmy Gutierrez--
22 Summary/Analysis

23 A. Ontario, Chino, and Monte Vista Water District and Monte Vista Irrigation
24 Company (the parties or the dissenters) filed this brief.

25 1. The parties voted against the terms of agreement (TOA) and "registered
26 their objections to it on the record."

27 B. The parties argue that the TOA provides for payment of many hundreds of
28 thousands of dollars for legal expenses for which the AgPool has never complied

1 with the court's May 28 order.

2 C. The parties argue that the App Pool members themselves are not parties to
3 the reimbursement motion and the App Pool has no authority to settle on behalf of
4 the parties.

5 1. The parties point out that App Pool member agencies, not the App
6 Pool, brought the original motion filed September 18, 2020. The result of
7 this motion was the court's order of May 28, 2021.

8 2. The May 28, 2021 order set the rules which the court would apply to
9 determine whether the AgPool (really the AgPool members) would be
10 entitled to reimbursement of their attorney fees and expenses pursuant to the
11 Judgment Paragraph 5.4(a).

12 3. The parties point out that there is no basis in law or in the Judgment by
13 which membership in the App Pool can compel App Pool members to abide
14 by the TOA.

15 a. The parties also point out that the parties individually signed the Peace
16 Agreements, the TOA would constitute an amendment to the Peace
17 Agreement, and unanimous approval is required to amend the Peace
18 Agreement.

19 i. The parties note even though a majority of the App Pool and the
20 AgPool members voted for the TOA, it is not binding on all the
21 member parties for the reasons the parties list, such as no legal basis
22 to compel all the App Pool members to abide by the TOA, that is,
23 to bind the parties.

24 4. The parties also point out that they were not involved in any settlement
25 negotiations with the AgPool. The TOA was negotiated with other members
26 of the App Pool.

27 5. The parties also objected to the TOA because;

28 a. They did not consent to it;

1 b. There is no legal authority authorizing the App Pool to enter into an
2 agreement on their behalves;

3 c. It is a modification of the court's May 28 order.

4 d. Its terms are vague.

5 6. The parties also objected to the joint statement because:

6 a. It falsely characterizes the App Pool as the "sole obligor" under Peace
7 Agreement, paragraph 5.4(a);

8 b. It purports to be a complete resolution of the fee issues, when it does
9 not.

10 c. It purports to be a comprehensive resolution of the AgPool's appeal,
11 when it is not.

12 X. Watermaster limited response to rebuttal brief and objections re joint
13 statement, etc., including declaration of Peter Kavounas--Summary/Analysis

14 A. Watermaster argues that each of the pools has acted in a representative
15 capacity since their entry into and the court's approval of the Peace Agreement. If
16 individual members of the App Pool believe their rights are harmed, then the
17 member or members can pursue remedies under the Peace Agreement or seek review
18 of Watermaster's actions.

19 1. The court agrees with the statement that App Pool members can seek
20 remedies through the court under the Peace Agreement. The parties are
21 doing so here.

22 B. The parties argue that unanimity is a requirement for the App Pool, or any
23 pool to act, allowing a party to "opt out" of a proposed action.

24 1. Watermaster argues that if an appropriator can "opt out" of a pool
25 proposed action, then the Restated Judgement cannot be managed efficiently
26 and cost-effectively.

27 XI. The parties' surrebuttal to Watermaster's limited response--Summary/Analysis

28 A. The parties argue that Watermaster's argument gives the App Pool "carte

1 blanche” to act in a representative capacity for its members and bind members to the
2 TOA without their consent.

- 3 1. They argue that there is no support for Watermaster’s position in the
4 Judgement or the Peace agreement.
- 5 2. They point out Peace Agreement Section 10.14 that “no amendments’
6 may be made to this [Peace] Agreement without the express written approval
7 of each Party to this Agreement.”
- 8 3. Their response contains an analysis of Paragraph 38, 41, and 43 of the
9 Judgment.
- 10 4. They also argue that Watermaster’s interpretation would unlawfully
11 expand the pools’ function and repeat that the TOA would result in an illegal
12 gift of public funds. There is also an argument that the TOA is against
13 public policy.

14 XII. Watermaster response to moving parties’ surrebuttal to Watermaster’s limited
15 response--Summary/Analysis

16 A. Watermaster points out that the App Pool is a party to the Peace [I]
17 Agreement, paragraph 5.4(a), which provides that the AgPool invoices will be “paid
18 by the App Pool.”

- 19 1. The parties each voted in favor of Resolution No. 2000.09 which
20 authorized the App Pool’s execution of the Peace Agreement and
21 participation as a “Party.”
- 22 2. Watermaster’s role re Section 5.4(a) is ministerial, as the court has
23 previously ruled. Watermaster notes that the parties’ position that the App
24 Pool had the authority to instruct how the provision would be implemented
25 but not how to resolve a dispute arising the same clause is difficult to
26 reconcile.
 - 27 a. The court re-affirms that Watermaster’s role re Section 5.4(a) is
28 ministerial.

1 XIII. App Pool's surrebuttal to rebuttal and objections re settlement including
2 declarations of John Bosler, Chris Diggs, and John Schatz--Summary/Analysis

3 A. The App Pool argues that Peace Agreement, section 5.4(a) expressly makes the
4 App Pool the sole obligor for payment of the AgPool's attorney fees and costs.

5 1. The Judgment App Pool pooling plan enables the App Pool to act
6 collectively and thereby empowers its members by majority vote to exercise
7 the App Pool's authority to enter the TOA.

8 a. The court orders did not address the permissible scope of settlement or
9 an administrative process for considering and processing AgPool expenses
10 set forth in the TOA.

11 2. The court orders addressed a motion for attorney fees under Peace I,
12 not a settlement agreement.

13 3. The parties'/dissenters' position regarding the lack of App Pool's
14 binding authority would nullify provisions of the Judgment, namely §§15, 31,
15 38, 41, 43-46, and exhibit H.

16 4. The parties'/dissenters' public policy arguments lack legal basis.

17 5. The App Pool's surrebuttal reprises a history of the case.

18 XIV. AgPool surrebuttal to rebuttal brief and objections re: joint statement
19 including declaration of Tracy Egoscue--Summary/Analysis

20 A. The AgPool argues that the TOA settles the fee dispute and makes further
21 proceedings moot. The TOA does not limit any individual appropriator's rights and
22 also is not an unlawful gift of public funds.

23 B. The AgPool surrebuttal outlines the procedure in which the pools reached the
24 TOA.

25 C. The AgPool argues that the settlement TOA is consistent with the court's May
26 28 order and is an appropriate remedy for the dispute between the App Pool and the
27 AgPool. It also resolves the reimbursement of \$4624.66 not currently held in
28 escrow.

1 D. The TOA is also consistent with the Peace Agreement and the court orders.

2 E. Finally, the settlement is valid and preserves the rights of the pools' and their
3 members. It also provides for flexibility to maximize the beneficial use of the Chino
4 Basin water.

5 XV. The parties/dissenters reply to App Pool and AgPool surrebuttals including
6 declarations of D. Crosley, S. Robles, and S. Burton--Summary/Analysis

7 A. The parties/dissenters still object because they have not received any of the
8 bills from the AgPool. They still consider the TOA to be essentially a blank check.
9 They still argue that the TOA is an unprecedented overreach of the pools' limited
10 power under the judgment and pooling plan.

11 B. The parties/dissenters argue that imposing the TOA on them will bring a new
12 era of basin governance by re-imagining that pools' governing bodies with
13 unforeseen superpowers to enter into contracts on behalf of their members in
14 violation of the law when their members include indicated governmental entities.

15
16
17 RULINGS AND ANALYSIS

18 I. Ruling: For the reasons set forth herein, the court denies the Chino motion and
19 corrected motion for reimbursement of attorney fees and expenses paid to the
20 AgPool. As set forth above, the court finds that the TOA settlement is valid,
21 binding on all App Pool members, and resolves all issues of Chino's motion and
22 corrected motion.

23 II. Ruling analysis

24 A. The original AgPool motion filed August 2, 2021, sought reimbursement of
25 \$460,723.63 as reasonable attorney fees to the AgPool and \$102,557.12 paid to the
26 Watermaster administrative reserve account for a total of \$563,280.75.

27 III. After the court's May 28, 2021 order which outlined the legal procedure and
28 requirements that the AgPool had to follow to seek reimbursement of its attorney

1 expenses, on August 2, the AgPool filed its motion for attorney fees. On December
2 3, 2021, the court signed the order which denied the AgPool's motion entirely.

3 A. At the hearing where the court denied the AgPool's attorney fee motion, it
4 appeared to the court that there might be additional attorney fees which parties had
5 paid for AgPool attorney expenses, but which should be reimbursed pursuant to the
6 court's decision and order. The court suggested the City of Chino file that motion,
7 and the result was Chino's filing of the motion and the corrected motion for
8 reimbursement under consideration in this order.

9 1. The court notes some confusion in the amounts the various parties
10 have been seeking.

11 a. In its motion, the AgPool sought legal expenses of \$460,723.63 plus
12 \$102,557.12 from the Watermaster administrative reserve account for a
13 total of \$563,280.75.

14 b. In this motion, Chino sought reimbursement of 483,202.25 for fiscal
15 years 2019-20 and 2020-21 and reimbursement to Watermaster
16 \$402,557.12.

17 c. The charts set forth above in sections III.C.1, III.C.2, III.C.3, and
18 III.C.4 above were not much help to the court in resolving its confusion.

19 2. Because the court is finding that the settlement agreement between the
20 AgPool and the App Pool resolves all these issues, the court does not need to
21 reconcile the figures.

22 IV. The TOA resolves the issues of the Chino's motion and corrected motion, and
23 the court finds that the TOA is valid because:

24 1. The App Pool and the AgPool who signed the TOA are also signatories
25 and thereby recognized as parties in the Peace I Agreement.

26 2. The court finds that the TOA does not contradict the court's
27 interpretation of Section 5.4(a) for the following reasons:

28 a. The court's May 28 ruling applied to set rules and procedures for the

1 AgPool to follow if the AgPool sought the court's approval of its attorney
2 fees and expenses. The court's ruling did not address any issue of
3 settlement of the AgPool and the App Pool regarding the AgPool's
4 attorney fees and expenses (attorney fees). The court has not prohibited
5 any settlement between the AgPool and the App Pool.

6 3. The TOA addresses a dispute that has arisen only between the Ag Pool
7 and the App Pool regarding the AgPool's attorney fees and expenses. The
8 TOA does not affect any other parties or Pool on any other issue. Therefore,
9 the TOA is not an amendment to the Peace Agreement.

10 4. The court finds that the TOA does not contradict the court's
11 interpretation of Section 5.4(a) for the following reasons:

12 a. The court's May 28 ruling applied to set rules and procedures for the
13 AgPool to follow if the AgPool sought the court's approval of its attorney
14 fees and expenses. The court's ruling did not address any issue of
15 settlement of the AgPool and the App Pool regarding the AgPool's attorney
16 fees and expenses (attorney fees). The court has not prohibited any
17 settlement between the AgPool and the App Pool.

18 b. Section 5.4(a) provides that the App Pool pay the AgPool's legal fees
19 any expenses. There is no further specification of a payor, so the court
20 concludes that the App Pool, qua pool, pays the AgPool's attorney fees.
21 The court May 28 order was only one way to accomplish this, and the court
22 did not rule out any other procedure or method, such as settlement.

23 5. The court concludes that the parties/dissenters must contribute as App
24 Pool members to the settlement of the AgPool attorney fees for the following
25 reasons:

26 a. The June 29, 2000 Peace Agreement was signed not only by the
27 individual parties but also by representatives of the AgPool and the App
28 Pool (not to mention the Non-Agricultural Pool). To the court, this

1 demonstrates that the Peace Agreement recognized the AgPool and the
2 App Pool as parties to the agreement.

3 1) The Peace Agreement's recognition of the App Pool as a party is
4 also demonstrated by the simple reference of the App Pool in
5 Section 5.4(a.).

6 b. So, for the last 20+ years, the court concludes that all the parties,
7 including the pools themselves, and the members of the respective pools,
8 recognized the 3 pools. Those pools have developed legal relationships
9 over the years not only among the members of the pools but also between
10 the pools themselves.

11 6. The court concludes that the App Pool has been paying the AgPool
12 legal expenses for the 20+ years since the Peace Agreement went into effect, or
13 at least the App Pool had the legal obligation to do so. Except for one
14 objection to the 2019-20 budget, there has been silence about those legal
15 relationships until now. Now the parties/dissenters have challenged the legal
16 relationships between the pools and their members.

17 a. The court concludes that the parties/dissenters challenge is
18 substantively a challenge to the amount of the AgPool's legal expenses.
19 The parties/dissenters continually raise the issue that they have never seen
20 the AgPools legal fee bills. The court challenge of the parties/dissenters
21 started with the amount of the bills and the budget that increased greatly
22 between fiscal years 2019-20 and 2020/21. That remains one of the
23 parties/dissenters' arguments that the TOA is invalid.

24 b. There was no follow up to the objection to the 2019-20 budget. In
25 order for the objection to have any legal effect, the objector would have to
26 file a motion with the court. There was no such motion, and the instant
27 motion is an untimely remedy for that one objection, even without the
28 TOA.

1 7. The court concludes that the basis of the parties/dissenters objections
2 to the TOA, and everything else about the AgPool's legal expenses, is a
3 quantative one, not a legal qualitative one because they App Pool has never
4 sought the court's intervention for more than 20 years.

5 8. Furthermore, the length of time that the parties/dissenters have failed
6 to raise their qualitatively legal objections in court to the App Pool's payment
7 of the AgPool's legal expenses has the following consequences:

- 8 a. They are barred by laches.
- 9 b. They are waived.

10 9. The App Pool might not have all the legal elements for a legal estoppel,
11 but the court finds the parties/dissenters are estopped from raising their legal
12 arguments now because all the parties and pool have not changed their
13 positions over the last 20+ years in reliance on the App Pool paying the
14 AgPool legal expense pursuant to the Peace Agreement. To the court, that is
15 the essence of an equitable estoppel.

16 10. Furthermore, with the standard operating procedures of the parties in
17 place from the Peace agreement for more than 20 years, without objection
18 raised to the court, and such things as the innumerable assessment packages
19 and the operational involvement of Watermaster, the court finds a basis for an
20 implied-in-fact contract that the App Pool members abide by the majority vote
21 on decisions of the App Pool. Furthermore, in the context this 40 year old
22 case including such things as the Judgment, Peace Agreement I and Peace
23 Agreement II, the court judgments and rulings, the OBMP, the court finds an
24 implied-in-law contract that the App Pool members abide and are bound by
25 the majority vote on decisions of the App Pool.

- 26 a. The court finds that the only way, in reason and in law, that the App
27 Pool can act qua pool pursuant to Peace I is through the weighted voting
28 system currently in place.

- 1) The App Pool surrebuttal brief, dated April 14, 2022, starting on page 6, outlines the how votes are assessed in the App Pool.
- a) The App Pool is not governed on the proposition that it is merely the sum of its members each exercising equal rights. Rather the Pooling Plan: assigns voting power to each member according to its share in the Operating Safe Yield (OSY) and assessments paid to Watermaster; appoints an advisory committee representative for each major appropriator and two representatives for the remaining appropriators; apportions assessments according to different formulas for each member's water production; and reallocates unallocated OSY water to the members based on their different operations. The App Pool argues that all App Pool members are bound by the judgment, including is voting provisions.

(1) In a footnote on page 6, the App Pool points out that regarding the voting power assigned to each member, the Exhibit H to the Judgment, Section 3, states in relevant part:

- (a) The total voting power of the pool committee shall be 1000 votes. Of these, 500 shall be allocated in proportion to decreed shares in Operating Safe Yield. The remaining 500 votes shall be allocated proportionally on the basis of assessments paid to Watermaster during the preceding year Affirmative action of the Committee shall require a majority vote of the voting power of the members in attendance, provided that it includes concurrence by at least one-third of its total members.

- 2) The App Pool surrebuttal brief, dated April 14, 2022, starting on page 7 outlines the procedure followed by the App Pool in approving the TOA.

- a) Beginning May 10, 2021, principals of the AgPool and principals

1 of certain App Pool members conducted five settlement
2 meetings. Ontario [one of the parties/dissenters] was
3 represented in each of the meetings, and Monte Vista's [also
4 one of the parties/dissenters] representative helped draft
5 substantive provisions of the Terms of Agreement. . . . In the
6 late stages of the negotiations, each Pool appointed negotiators,
7 but the App Pool gave instructions to its negotiators in
8 confidential meetings in which all App Pool members and their
9 counsel were given a chance to participate.

10 b) Ultimately, the AgPool and App Pool resolved their dispute
11 regarding the AgPool's attorney's fees and other expenses
12 which underpinned the attorney fee motions for App Pool,
13 AgPool, and Chino. On March 18, 2022, the AgPool approved
14 the Terms of Agreement. On March 22. The App Pool
15 approved the Terms of Agreement by 59.363% of the weighted
16 votes of thirteen App Pool members, which is substantially
17 more than the required concurrence by 33% of the App Pool
18 members.

19 3) The declaration of App Pool Chair John Bossler, dated April 13,
20 2022, shows that Scott Burton representing Ontario and Monte
21 Vista Water District General Manager Justin Scott-Coe were
22 involved in the settlement discussions. The court must conclude
23 that the Chino's voice was also heard during the settlement
24 negotiations (either directly or indirectly).

25 4) Pomona City Water Resources Director Chris Diggs states in his
26 declaration dated April 12, 2022 that all App Pool members,
27 including the parties/dissenters, were provided an opportunity to
28 participate in the confidential App Pool settlement meetings; and

1 the parties/dissenters input was fully considered in working out the
2 TOA.

3 5) Additional details of the vote are contained in the declaration of
4 Chino City Utilities Engineering and Operations Manager David
5 Crosley, dated April 18, 2022. He states that on March 22, 2022,
6 he attended the App Pool Committee meeting where the TOA was
7 discussed and voted on. On behalf of Chino, he voted against the
8 TOA. There were a total of 974,406 weighted votes cast, and
9 593,628 weighted votes of App Pool member votes were in favor
10 of the TOA, that is, 59.363%. Crosley notes that in addition to the
11 public entity votes App Pool member votes in favor of the TOA,
12 there were an additional 178,739 App Pool member votes in favor
13 of the TOA.

14 Public Entities voting in favor of the TOA	
15 Chino Hills City	36.950
16 Cucamonga Valley Water District	73.887
17 Jurupa Community Services District	93.437
18 Pomona City	167.197
19 Upland City	41.418
20 Total Public Entity Votes in Favor of the TOA	414.889

21 b. With the votes of other public entities in favor of the TOA, the court
22 must conclude that the legal arguments raised by the parties/dissenters are
23 disputed by other public agencies such as Chino Hills, Pomona, and
24 Upland, and other water districts such as Cucamonga Valley Water District
and Jurupa Community Water District.

25 11. The TOA resolves all the issues raised by Chino's motion and corrected
26 motion.

27 a. The TOA references the court's May 28, 2021 order and addresses the
28 reimbursement of the \$102,557.12 to Watermaster.

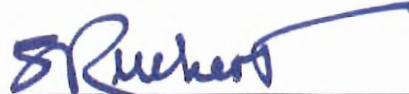
- 1 b. It states it is a compromise and settlement of disputed issues.
2 c. It dismisses the storage contests, which the court concludes were the
3 genesis of all the AgPool attorney fee issues.
4 d. Paragraph 6 of the TOA tracks the court's May 28, 2021 order.
5 e. It provides a procedure for the resolution of future disputes.

6 12. The court also finds that the TOA is consistent with the Judgment and
7 the Peace Agreements.

8 V. The court finds unpersuasive any arguments not specifically addressed above.
9

10
11 Therefore, IT IS ORDERED, ADJUDGED, and DECREED,
12 That the motion and corrected motion of the City of Chino for reimbursement of
13 attorneys fees and expense paid to the Agricultural Pool IS DENIED.
14

15
16 Dated: April 22, 2022

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18 
19 _____
20 Stanford E. Reichert, Judge
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CHINO BASIN WATERMASTER

Case No. RCVRS 51010

Chino Basin Municipal Water District v. City of Chino, et al.

PROOF OF SERVICE

I declare that:

I am employed in the County of San Bernardino, California. I am over the age of 18 years and not a party to the within action. My business address is Chino Basin Watermaster, 9641 San Bernardino Road, Rancho Cucamonga, California 91730; telephone (909) 484-3888.

On April 27, 2022 I served the following:

1. NOTICE OF ORDER

BY MAIL: in said cause, by placing a true copy thereof enclosed with postage thereon fully prepaid, for delivery by United States Postal Service mail at Rancho Cucamonga, California, addresses as follows:

See attached service list: Master Email Distribution List

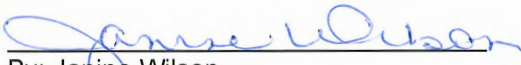
BY PERSONAL SERVICE: I caused such envelope to be delivered by hand to the addressee.

BY FACSIMILE: I transmitted said document by fax transmission from (909) 484-3890 to the fax number(s) indicated. The transmission was reported as complete on the transmission report, which was properly issued by the transmitting fax machine.

BY ELECTRONIC MAIL: I transmitted notice of availability of electronic documents by electronic transmission to the email address indicated. The transmission was reported as complete on the transmission report, which was properly issued by the transmitting electronic mail device.

I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of California that the above is true and correct.

Executed on April 27, 2022 in Rancho Cucamonga, California.


By: Janine Wilson
Chino Basin Watermaster

PAUL HOFER
11248 S TURNER AVE
ONTARIO, CA 91761

JEFF PIERSON
2 HEXAM
IRVINE, CA 92603

ALLEN HUBSCH
LAW OFFICE OF ALLEN HUBSCH
8549 WILSHIRE BLVD., SUITE 3220
BEVERLY HILLS, CA 90211

Members:

Agnes Cheng	agnes.cheng@cc.sbcounty.gov
Al Lopez	alopez@wmwd.com
Alan Frost	Alan.Frost@dpw.sbcounty.gov
Alberto Mendoza	Alberto.Mendoza@cmc.com
Alejandro R. Reyes	arreyes@sgvwater.com
Alfonso Ruiz	alfonso.ruiz@cmc.com
Allen Hubsch	ahubsch@hubschlaw.com
Alma Heustis	alma.heustis@californiasteel.com
Alonso Jurado	ajurado@cbwm.org
Amanda Coker	amandac@cvwdwater.com
Amanda Meere	Amanda.Meere@cao.sbcounty.gov
Amer Jakher	AJakher@cityofchino.org
Amy Bonczewski	ABonczewski@ontarioca.gov
Andrew Gagen	agagen@kidmanlaw.com
Andy Campbell	acampbell@ieua.org
Andy Malone	amalone@westyost.com
Angelica Todd	angelica.todd@ge.com
Angelo Simoes	Angelo.Simoes@linde.com
Anna Nelson	atruongnelson@cbwm.org
April Robitaille	arobitaille@bhfs.com
Armando Martinez	armartinez@fontana.org
Art Bennett	citycouncil@chinohills.org
Arthur Kidman	akidman@kidmanlaw.com
Ashok Dhingra	ash@akdconsulting.com
Ben Lewis	benjamin.lewis@gswater.com
Ben Peralta	bperalta@tvmwd.com
Benjamin M. Weink	ben.weink@tetrattech.com
Beth.McHenry	Beth.McHenry@hoferranch.com
Betty Anderson	banderson@jcsd.us
Betty Folsom	bfolsom@jcsd.us
Bill Schwartz	bschwartz@mvwd.org
Bob Bowcock	bbowcock@irmwater.com
Bob DiPrimio	rjdiprimio@sgvwater.com
Bob Feenstra	bobfeenstra@gmail.com
Bob Kuhn	bkuhn@tvmwd.com
Bob Kuhn	bgkuhn@aol.com
Bob Page	Bob.Page@rov.sbcounty.gov
Brad Herrema	bherrema@bhfs.com
Braden Yu	Byu@ci.upland.ca.us
Bradley Jensen	bradley.jensen@cao.sbcounty.gov
Brandi Goodman-Decoud	bgdecoud@mvwd.org
Brandon Howard	brahoward@niagarawater.com
Brenda Fowler	balee@fontanawater.com
Brent Yamasaki	byamasaki@mwdh2o.com
Brian Dickinson	bdickinson65@gmail.com
Brian Geye	bgeye@autoclubspeedway.com
Brian Lee	blee@sawaterco.com
Carmen Sierra	carmens@cvwdwater.com
Carol Boyd	Carol.Boyd@doj.ca.gov
Carolina Sanchez	csanchez@westyost.com
Casey Costa	ccosta@chinodesalter.org

Cassandra Hooks	chooks@niagarawater.com
Catharine Irvine	cirvine@DowneyBrand.com
Chad Blais	cblais@ci.norco.ca.us
Chander Letulle	cletulle@jcsd.us
Charles Field	cdfield@att.net
Charles Linder	Charles.Linder@nrgenergy.com
Charles Moorrees	cmoorrees@sawaterco.com
Chino Hills City Council	citycouncil@chinohills.org
Chris Berch	cberch@jcsd.us
Chris Diggs	Chris_Diggs@ci.pomona.ca.us
Christiana Daisy	cdaisy@ieua.org
Christofer Coppinger	ccoppinger@geoscience-water.com
Christopher M. Sanders	cms@eslawfirm.com
Christopher Quach	cquach@ontarioca.gov
Christopher R. Guillen	cguillen@bhfs.com
Cindy Cisneros	cindyc@cvwdwater.com
Cindy Li	Cindy.li@waterboards.ca.gov
Courtney Jones	cjjones@ontarioca.gov
Craig Miller	CMiller@wmwd.com
Craig Stewart	craig.stewart@woodplc.com
Cris Fealy	cifealy@fontanawater.com
Dan Arrighi	darrighi@sgvwater.com
Dan McKinney	dmckinney@douglascountylaw.com
Daniel Bobadilla	dbobadilla@chinohills.org
Daniel P. Barer	daniel@pollakvida.com
Danny Kim	dkim@linklogistics.com
Dave Argo	daveargo46@icloud.com
Dave Crosley	DCrosley@cityofchino.org
David Aladjem	daladjem@downeybrand.com
David De Jesus	ddejesus@tvmwd.com
David Huynh	dhuynh@cbwm.org
Dawn Forgeur	dawn.forgeur@stoel.com
Dawn Martin	Dawn.Martin@cc.sbcounty.gov
Denise Garzaro	dgarzaro@ieua.org
Dennis Mejia	dmejia@ontarioca.gov
Dennis Williams	dwilliams@geoscience-water.com
Diana Frederick	diana.frederick@cdcr.ca.gov
Ed Means	edmeans@roadrunner.com
Edgar Tellez Foster	etellezfoster@cbwm.org
Eduardo Espinoza	EduardoE@cvwdwater.com
Edward Kolodziej	edward.kolodziej@ge.com
Elizabeth M. Calciano	ecalciano@hensleylawgroup.com
Elizabeth P. Ewens	elizabeth.ewens@stoel.com
Elizabeth Skrzat	ESkrzat@cbwcd.org
Eric Fordham	eric_fordham@geopentech.com
Eric Garner	eric.garner@bbklaw.com
Eric Grubb	ericg@cvwdwater.com
Eric Papathakis	Eric.Papathakis@cdcr.ca.gov
Eric Tarango	edtarango@fontanawater.com
Erika Clement	Erika.clement@sce.com
Eunice Ulloa	eulloa@cityofchino.org
Evette Ounanian	EvetteO@cvwdwater.com
Frank Brommenschenkel	frank.brommen@verizon.net

Frank Yoo
Fred Fudacz
Fred Galante
Garrett Rapp
Gene Tanaka
Geoffrey Kamansky
Geoffrey Vanden Heuvel
Gerald Yahr
Gina Nicholls
Gino L. Filippi
Gracie Torres
Grant Mann
Greg Woodside
Gregor Larabee
Ha T. Nguyen
Henry DeHaan
Irene Islas
James Curatalo
James Jenkins
James McKenzie
Jane Anderson
Janelle S.H. Krattiger, Esq
Janine Wilson
Jasmin A. Hall
Jason Marseilles
Jason Pivovaroff
Jayne Joy
Jean Cihigoyenetche
Jeff Evers
Jeff Mosher
Jeffrey L. Pierson
Jennifer Hy-Luk
Jeremy N. Jungries
Jessie Ruedas
Jim Markman
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Jimmy Gutierrez - Law Offices of Jimmy Gutierrez

Jimmy L. Gutierrez
Jimmy Medrano
Jiwon Seung
Joanne Chan
Joao Feitoza
Jody Roberto
Joe Graziano
Joe Joswiak
Joel Ignacio
John Abusham
John Bosler
John Harper
John Huitsing
John Lopez
John Lopez and Nathan Cole

FrankY@cbwm.org
ffudacz@nossaman.com
fgalante@awattorneys.com
grapp@westyost.com
Gene.Tanaka@bbklaw.com
gkamansky@niagarawater.com
geoffreyvh60@gmail.com
yahrj@koll.com
gnicholls@nossaman.com
Ginoffvine@aol.com
gtorres@wmwd.com
GMann@dpw.sbcounty.gov
gwoodside@ocwd.com
Gregor.Larabee@cdr.ca.gov
ha.nguyen@stoel.com
Hdehaan1950@gmail.com
irene.islas@bbklaw.com
jamesc@cvwdwater.com
cnomgr@airports.sbcounty.gov
jmckenzie@dpw.sbcounty.gov
janderson@jcsd.us
janelle.krattiger@stoel.com
JWilson@cbwm.org
jhall@ieua.org
jmarseilles@ieua.org
JPivovaroff@wmwd.com
Jayne.Joy@waterboards.ca.gov
Jean@thejclawfirm.com
jevers@niagarawater.com
jmosher@sawpa.org
jpierson@intexcorp.com
jhyluk@ieua.org
jjungreis@rutan.com
Jessie@thejclawfirm.com
jmarkman@rwglaw.com
jbowman@ontarioca.gov

jimmylaredo@gmail.com
Jimmy@City-Attorney.com
Jaime.medrano2@cdr.ca.gov
JiwonS@cvwdwater.com
jchan@wvwd.org
joao.feitoza@cmc.com
jroberto@tvmwd.com
jgraz4077@aol.com
JJoswiak@cbwm.org
jignacio@ieua.org
john.abusham@nrg.com
johnb@cvwdwater.com
jrharper@harperburns.com
johnhuitsing@gmail.com
jlopez@sarwc.com
customerservice@sarwc.com

John Mendoza	jmendoza@tvmwd.com
John Partridge	jpartridge@angelica.com
John Schatz	jschatz13@cox.net
John Thornton	JThorntonPE@H2OExpert.net
Jose A Galindo	Jose.A.Galindo@linde.com
Josh Swift	jmswift@fontanawater.com
Joshua Aguilar	jaguilar@ieua.org
Justin Brokaw	jbrokaw@marygoldmutualwater.com
Justin Nakano	JNakano@cbwm.org
Justin Scott-Coe Ph. D.	jscottcoe@mwwd.org
Karen Williams	kwilliams@sawpa.org
Kathleen Brundage	kathleen.brundage@californiasteel.com
Kati Parker	katiandcraig@verizon.net
Keith Kramer	kkramer@fontana.org
Keith Person	keith.person@waterboards.ca.gov
Ken Waring	kwaring@jcsd.us
Kevin O'Toole	kotoole@ocwd.com
Kevin Sage	Ksage@IRMwater.com
Kristina Robb	KRobb@cc.sbcounty.gov
Kurt Berchtold	kberchtold@gmail.com
Kyle Brochard	KBrochard@rwglaw.com
Kyle Snay	kylesnay@gswater.com
Larry Cain	larry.cain@cdcr.ca.gov
Laura Mantilla	lmantilla@ieua.org
Laura Yraceburu	lyraceburu@bhfs.com
Lauren Harold	lharold@linklogistics.com
Lauren V. Neuhaus, Esq.	lauren.neuhaus@stoel.com
Lee McElhaney	lmcElhaney@bmklawplc.com
Linda Jadeski	ljadeski@wwwd.org
Lisa Lemoine	LLemoine@wmwd.com
Liz Hurst	ehurst@ieua.org
Marcella Correa	MCorrea@rwglaw.com
Marco Tule	mtule@ieua.org
Maria Ayala	mayala@jcsd.us
Maria Mendoza	mmendoza@westyost.com
Maribel Sosa	msosa@ci.pomona.ca.us
Marilyn Levin	marilyn.levin@doj.ca.gov
Mark D. Hensley	mhensley@hensleylawgroup.com
Mark Wildermuth	mwildermuth@westyost.com
Mark Wiley	mwiley@chinohills.org
Martin Cihigoyenetché	marty@thejclawfirm.com
Martin Rauch	martin@rauchcc.com
Martin Zvirbulis	mezvirbulis@sgwater.com
Mathew C. Ballantyne	mballantyne@cityofchino.org
Matthew H. Litchfield	mlitchfield@tvmwd.com
May Atencio	matencio@fontana.org
Melanie Trevino	Mtrevino@jcsd.us
Michael A. Blazevic	mblazevic@westyost.com
Michael Adler	michael.adler@mcmcn.net
Michael B. Brown, Esq.	michael.brown@stoel.com
Michael Fam	mfam@dpw.sbcounty.gov
Michael P. Thornton	mthornton@tkeengineering.com
Michelle Licea	mlicea@mwwd.org

Michelle Staples	mstaples@jacksontidus.law
Mike Gardner	mgardner@wmwd.com
Mike Maestas	mikem@cvwdwater.com
Miriam Garcia	mgarcia@ieua.org
Moore, Toby	TobyMoore@gswater.com
MWDProgram	MWDProgram@sdca.org
Nadia Aguirre	naguirre@tvmwd.com
Natalie Costaglio	natalie.costaglio@mcmcn.net
Nathan deBoom	n8deboom@gmail.com
Neetu Gupta	ngupta@ieua.org
Nichole Horton	Nichole.Horton@pomona.ca.gov
Nick Jacobs	njacobs@somachlaw.com
Nicole deMoet	ndemoet@ci.upland.ca.us
Nicole Escalante	NEscalante@ontario.ca.gov
Noah Golden-Krasner	Noah.goldenkrasner@doj.ca.gov
Parker Simon	psimon@bhfs.com
Paul Deutsch	paul.deutsch@woodplc.com
Paul Hofer	farmerhofer@aol.com
Paul Hofer	farmwatchtoo@aol.com
Paul S. Leon	pleon@ontario.ca.gov
Pete Hall	pete.hall@cdcr.ca.gov
Pete Hall	rpetehall@gmail.com
Pete Vicario	PVicario@cityofchino.org
Peter Hettinga	peterhettinga@yahoo.com
Peter Kavounas	PKavounas@cbwm.org
Peter Rogers	progers@chinohills.org
Rachel Avila	R.Avila@MPGLAW.com
Randy Visser	RVisser@sheppardmullin.com
Richard Anderson	horsfly1@yahoo.com
Rick Darnell	Richard.Darnell@nrgenergy.com
Rick Rees	richard.rees@woodplc.com
Rickey S. Manbahal	smanbahal@wmwd.org
Rita Pro	rpro@cityofchino.org
Robert C. Hawkins	RHawkins@earthlink.net
Robert DeLoach	robertadeloach1@gmail.com
Robert E. Donlan	red@eslawfirm.com
Robert Neufeld	robneu1@yahoo.com
Robert Wagner	rwagner@wbecorp.com
Ron Craig	Rcraig21@icloud.com
Ron LaBrucherie, Jr.	ronLaBrucherie@gmail.com
Ronald C. Pietersma	rcpietersma@aol.com
Ruben Llamas	rllamas71@yahoo.com
Ruby Favela	rfavela@cbwm.org
Ryan Shaw	RShaw@wmwd.com
Sally H. Lee	shlee@ieua.org
Sam Nelson	snelson@ci.norco.ca.us
Sam Rubenstein	srubenstein@wpcarey.com
Sandra S. Rose	directorrose@mvwd.org
Sarah Foley	Sarah.Foley@bbklaw.com
Scott Burton	sburton@ontario.ca.gov
Scott Slater	sslater@bhfs.com
Seth J. Zielke	szielke@fontanawater.com
Shawnda M. Grady	sgrady@eslawfirm.com

Sheila D. Brown	sheila.brown@stoel.com
Shivaji Deshmukh	sdeshmukh@ieua.org
Skylar Stephens	SStephens@sdewa.org
slee@tvmwd.com	slee@tvmwd.com
Sonya Barber	sbarber@ci.upland.ca.us
Sonya Zite	szite@wmwd.com
Stephanie Reimer	SReimer@mvwd.org
Stephanie Viveros	sviveros@cbwm.org
Stephen Deitsch	stephen.deitsch@bbklaw.com
Steve Kennedy	skennedy@bmklawplc.com
Steve M. Anderson	steve.anderson@bbklaw.com
Steve Nix	snix@ci.upland.ca.us
Steve Riboli	steve.riboli@sanantoniowinery.com
Steve Smith	ssmith@ieua.org
Steve W. Ledbetter, PE	sledbetter@tkeengineering.com
Steven Andrews Engineering	sandrews@sandrewsengineering.com
Steven Flower	sflower@rwglaw.com
Steven J. Elie	selie@ieua.org
Steven J. Elie	s.elie@mpglaw.com
Steven Popelar	spopelar@jcsd.us
Steven Raughley	Steven.Raughley@cao.sbcounty.gov
Susan Palmer	spalmer@kidmanlaw.com
Tammi Ford	tford@wmwd.com
Tariq Awan	Tariq.Awan@cdcr.ca.gov
Taya Victorino	tayav@cvwdwater.com
Teri Layton	tlayton@sawaterco.com
Terry Catlin	tlcatlin@wfajpa.org
Tim Barr	tbarr@wmwd.com
Tim Kellett	tkellett@tvmwd.com
Tim Moore	tmoore@westyost.com
Timothy Ryan	tjryan@sgvwater.com
Toby Moore	TobyMoore@gswater.com
Todd Minten	tminten@sbcglobal.net
Tom Barnes	tbarnes@esassoc.com
Tom Bunn	TomBunn@Lagerlof.com
Tom Cruikshank	tcruikshank@linklogistics.com
Tom Harder	tharder@thomashardercompany.com
Tom McPeters	THMcP@aol.com
Tom O'Neill	toneill@chinodesalter.org
Toni Medell	mmedel@mbakerintl.com
Tony Long	tlong@angelica.com
Toyasha Sebbag	tsebbag@cbwcd.org
Tracy J. Egoscue	tracy@egoscuelaw.com
Van Jew	vjew@wwwd.org
Vanny Khu	VKhu@ontarioca.gov
Veronica Tristan	vtristan@jcsd.us
Veva Weamer	vweamer@westyost.com
Victor Preciado	Victor_Preciado@ci.pomona.ca.us
Vivian Castro	vcastro@cityofchino.org
Wade Fultz	Wade.Fultz@cmc.com
WestWater Research, LLC	research@waterexchange.com
William J Brunick	bbrunick@bmblawoffice.com
William McDonnell	wmcdonnell@ieua.org

William Urena

wurena@emeraldus.com