President’s Message

Celebrating and giving thanks shouldn’t just be for family and friends. The civil engineering industry has endured the pandemic and associated economic turmoil fairly well, and we have continued to advance our profession through new research, innovative design, and constructing amazing projects. I am extremely thankful to work beside so many talented engineers throughout the LA Section and very appreciative of the support and commitment our ASCE volunteers at all levels provide to help us all enjoy and advance our profession. I cannot wait to see what we accomplish in 2022.

While we typically think of family and friends as we wrap up the year and start the new one, and rightfully so, I ask you to also think of your work family, professional network, and your own accomplishments.

Engineers are generally humble worker bees, the offensive linemen of the development and infrastructure industry. We focus on the next task and the upcoming project, taking little time to toot our own horn and recognize how impressive our peers and projects may be. Sadly, if we don’t do it, it likely won’t happen, as most of society and even members of our own industry don’t understand what we do or how much work goes into developing the skills required to do it.

I loved attending and reading about recent events where we highlighted some of our best and brightest. Over the past couple of months, the San Bernardino-Riverside Branch hosted their annual awards event, Orange County Branch presented scholarships during their History and Heritage and Student Scholarship Night, and we hosted our LA Section Awards event.

In addition to our local recognition, ASCE Society issues awards throughout the year and two recent awardees include Cris Liban who received the 2022 Henry L. Michel Award for Industry Advancement of Research for his work on sustainability, and the Orange County Branch earned the 2021 Outstanding Section and Branch Website Award. Congratulations to Cris and the OC Branch leadership team for continuing to raise the bar.

If you have not taken the opportunity to attend an awards event recently, I highly encourage you to do so. Take a break from the computer or the project trailer and see what your friends and peers are accomplishing all around you. Attending will motivate you and you will gain further appreciation for the work you do every day. Even better, you may be inspired to nominate one of your projects, or a fellow engineer, for recognition. If you weren’t able to attend the LA section awards event, or you need a little refresher, I encourage you to check out the recent LA Section award winners - especially if you need a little motivation to kickoff 2022.

The award winners humbly say they their accomplishments are not their own, but due to the support and collaboration from many others, and they are typically right. No matter how impressive the individual engineer winning the award may be, their projects were successful because of a greater team. They learned their craft thanks to passionate professors, patient
project managers, and selfless mentors. Sharing the award winners’ stories increases the awareness and appreciation for our profession.

It has been a tough couple of years, but the civil engineering industry withstood the ups and downs relatively well. While I know many of you rushed to complete about 8 weeks of work in the three weeks between the Thanksgiving and Christmas breaks, and are playing catch up as 2022 starts, please take at least a few minutes to reflect on what you have accomplished and be thankful for the opportunities you have earned by deciding to serve our society as a civil engineer.

### Article

**Sacramento Chapter Environmental and Water Resources Institute (SCEWRI) Fall 2021 Update**

*by Kevin Kasberg, 2021-2023 Chair, SCEWRI*

The Sacramento Chapter of EWRI (SCEWRI) continues to be an active institute in the Sacramento Section. The mission of SCEWRI is to openly foster, through collaborative interaction and ongoing dialogue, enhanced coordination and cooperation between water engineers, hydrologists, water resource planners, aquatic-resource specialists, and environmental practitioners. During the past year or so, SCEWRI switched gears from in-person meetings to virtual quarterly meetings. SCEWRI saw increased attendance in our virtual quarterly technical meetings.

The SCEWRI welcomed a new Board in July 2021. The Board hit the ground running - scheduling speakers, updating the bylaws, and getting the finances organized in preparation of returning to the in-person networking events. The Board also welcomed three new special advisors from academia, the public sector, and the private sector. Each board position and special advisor is a two-year term running from July through June. Through the revised bylaws, SCEWRI split the Secretary position into two with one focused on SCEWRI events and the other focused on SCEWRI Board.

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<td>Vice Chair - Public Sector</td>
<td>Karandeep Singh, California Department of Water Resources</td>
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<td>Vice Chair - Private Sector</td>
<td>Steven Micks, Jacobs Engineering</td>
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<td>Secretary - Events</td>
<td>Amanda Becker, US Bureau of Reclamation</td>
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<td>Liz DalRamo, Woodard &amp; Curran</td>
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<td>Treasurer</td>
<td>Nicole Olorio, California Department of Water Resources</td>
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<td>Ex-Officio Chair</td>
<td>Derya Sumer, US Bureau of Reclamation</td>
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The Board is supported by the following 2021-2022 Special Advisors: Brian Currier, Office of Water Programs, CSU Sacramento; Ben Tustison, MBK Engineers; Emmanuel Asinas, California Department of Water Resources; and Kaveh Zamani, California Department of Transportation.

During the 2021 term, the Board invited experts to speak on some of the most pressing issues facing the water and environment in the Sacramento region. In August 2021, Jerry Brown (Sites Project Authority Executive Director) and Ali Forsythe (Environmental Planning and Permitting Manager at the Sites Project Authority) presented an overview of the Sites Reservoir Project, an off-stream water storage project in Northern California that will provide benefits to the environment, families, and farms.

Gary Bardini P.E., Director of Planning with Sacramento Area Flood Control Agency presented during the November meeting, on Forecast-Informed Reservoir Operation with Managed Aquifer Recharge in the American River Basin as a possible adaptation to address various climate vulnerabilities and regional water resiliency.

The next scheduled event is in February 2022, with the speaker to be determined. At this time, SCEWRI will continue to hold the events virtually. For more information on the SCEWRI events, please contact sacewri@gmail.com or connect with the SCEWRI LinkedIn page.
State Investments and Legislative Update

by Richard Markuson, CA Region 9 Legislative Advocate

Fall Recess Ends
The Legislature returned to Sacramento on January 3, 2022, at 2:00 pm.

State Legislation
Following is the final list of ASCE tracked bills. They are sorted by bill number.

AB 43 (Friedman - D) grants Caltrans and local authorities greater flexibility in setting speed limits based on recommendations the Zero Traffic Fatality Task Force made in January 2020.

Signed by the Governor

AB 464 (Mullin - D) expands the types of facilities and projects EIFDs may fund to include the acquisition, construction, or repair of commercial structures of small businesses, or facilities in which nonprofit community organizations provide health, youth, homeless, and social services, as specified. This bill is sponsored by the author. Signed by the Governor. Chapter 25, Statutes of 2021. ASCE Position: Watch

AB 434 (Friedman - D) requires architects to complete five hours of continuing education training on zero net carbon design for every two-year licensing period. Signed by the Governor - Chapter 176, Statutes of 2021. ASCE Position: Watch

AB 955 (Quirk - D) establishes additional requirements for the Department of Transportation (Caltrans) when it reviews an application for an encroachment permit for a broadband facility. Signed by the Governor.

AB 1010 (Berman - D) requires architects to complete five hours of continuing education training on zero net carbon design for every two-year licensing period. Signed by the Governor - Chapter 176, Statutes of 2021. ASCE Position: Watch

AB 1035 (Salas - D) this bill would have deleted the condition in the Road Maintenance and Rehabilitation Program requirement imposed on the department and those cities and counties to use advanced technologies and material recycling techniques to the extent possible. Vetoes by Governor. Governor's Statement: Requiring all local agencies that have jurisdiction over streets and highways to comply with Caltrans' recycling standards may result in increased costs. The standards adopted by Caltrans are specifically designed for Caltrans projects, which are generally larger and address a greater volume of traffic than some local projects. These requirements may not be appropriate for all local streets and roads. Further, this bill may create a reimbursable state mandate, which could result in significant state costs. ASCE Position: Watch

AB 1147 (Friedman - D) would have made numerous substantive changes to the required elements of MPOs regional transportation plans to ensure effective implementation of sustainable communities strategies and alternative planning strategies. This bill also requires the Governor’s Office of Planning and Research to develop a guidance document to provide best practices for establishing “15-minute communities,” and requires Caltrans to develop a bicycle highway pilot program. Vetoed by Governor. Governor's Statement This bill adds new and modified reporting at the local and regional levels on compatibility of land use and transportation planning with greenhouse gas reduction goals and a proposal for a pilot program to create a network of bicycle highways. Although the bill seeks to improve transparency to the Sustainable Community Strategies process, it does not require or incentivize regional and local governments to make land use decisions that change development and transportation patterns. While I share the author’s goal to align policies and promote the use of active transportation modes such as walking and biking, the bill is not necessary because state agencies are already collaborating on these policies and updating local requirements. I proposed $7.6 billion to make key investments in a wide variety of critically necessary projects including high speed rail, transit connectivity projects in advance of the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics, active transportation, and a variety of other rail system improvements. Not only will these projects improve safety and access for bicyclists and pedestrians, they will significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions and are key to meeting our state’s climate objectives. ASCE Position: Watch

AB 1238 (Ting - D) this bill would have repealed provisions of law prohibiting pedestrians from entering a roadway and specifies that pedestrians shall not be subject to a fine or criminal penalty for crossing or entering a roadway when no cars are present. Vetoed by Governor. Governor’s Statement I want to thank the author for bringing this important issue forward. Unequal enforcement of jaywalking laws and the use of minor offenses like it as a pretext to stop people of color, especially in under-resourced communities, is unacceptable and must be addressed. While I am committed to tackling this issue as part of our continued work to reduce excessive use of force and bias, I cannot support this bill in its current form. California has the highest total number of pedestrian fatalities in the nation and ranks 8th for pedestrian fatality rate per 100,000 in population. According to data collected in the Statewide Integrated Traffic Records System, there has been an average of 3,500 traffic fatalities per year over the past five years and approximately 30 percent of those were pedestrian fatalities. During that time period, 63 percent of the crashes resulting in pedestrian fatalities were the result of pedestrians taking actions against traffic controls or safety laws. I am concerned that AB 1238 will intentionally reduce pedestrian safety and potentially increase fatalities or serious injuries caused by pedestrians that enter our roadways at inappropriate locations.

AB 1499 (Daly - D) authorizes Caltrans and RTPAs to use the design-build procurement method for transportation projects in California until 2034. Signed by the Governor. - Chapter 212, Statutes of 2021. ASCE Position: Support

SB 83 (Allen - D) would have established the Sea Level Rise Revolving Loan Program through the collaboration primarily of the Coastal Conservancy and the I-Bank. Vetoed by the Governor. In Senate. Consideration of Governor’s veto pending. Governor’s Statement To the Members of the California State Senate: I am returning Senate Bill 83 without my signature. This bill requires the Ocean Protection
Council to develop the Sea Level Rise Revolving Loan Program to provide low-interest loans to local jurisdictions to purchase coastal properties identified as vulnerable. Unfortunately, it does not comprehensively address the costly activities envisioned, likely to be carried out over decades. Climate-driven sea level rise presents major land-use planning challenges. The scope and scale of the problem, and the work necessary to make sure that California can adapt to rising seas, requires innovative planning approaches and implementation action at the state and local level. Financial tools, such as the one proposed in SB 83, have the potential to play an important role in a portfolio of strategies that will help build coastal resilience in California. However, such an effort should be considered within a comprehensive lens that evaluates properties to be included in a statewide plan. I encourage the author to continue to engage with my Administration as we work together to ensure California’s coastal communities and natural resources are resilient to sea level rise. ASCE Position: Watch

SB 273 (Hertzberg - D) authorizes a municipal wastewater agency to acquire, construct, expand, operate, maintain, and provide facilities to manage stormwater and dry weather runoff. Signed by the Governor. Chapter 241, Statutes of 2021. ASCE Position: Favor

SB 319 (Melendez - R) requires local agencies that do not comply with impact fee annual report requirements for three years to include each year they did not comply with these requirements in requested audits. Signed by the Governor. Chapter 385, Statutes of 2021. ASCE Position: Watch

SB 339 (Wiener - D) extends the California Road Charge Pilot Program from 2023 until 2027. This extension will allow the CTC and CalSTA to continue their study of the viability of a road charge, or a fee based on road usage, as a replacement for the current gas tax. Signed by the Governor. Chapter 308, Statutes of 2021. ASCE Position: Support

SB 403 (Gonzalez - D) authorizes the State Water Resources Control Board to order consolidation between a receiving water system and an atrisk water system under specified circumstances. Signed by the Governor. Chapter 242, Statutes of 2021. ASCE Position: Watch

SB 427 (Eggman - D) allows water agencies and districts to adopt an ordinance with enhanced penalties for water theft. Signed by the Governor. Chapter 137, Statutes of 2021. ASCE Position: Support

SB 44 (Allen - D) establishes expedited administrative and judicial review of environmental review and approvals granted for “environmental leadership transit projects” that meet specified requirements. Requires prevailing wages and apprentices on private projects authorized by the bill. Signed by the Governor. Chapter 633, Statutes of 2021. ASCE Position: Watch

SB 552 (Hertzberg - D) imposes drought and water shortage contingency planning requirements on state small water systems, counties, and specified state agencies. Signed by the Governor. Chapter 245, Statutes of 2021. ASCE Position: Support

SB 626 (Dodd - D) authorizes DWR to use the design-build and CM/GC processes for project delivery for facilities of the State Water Project, excluding through Delta conveyance. Signed by the Governor. Chaptered by Secretary of State. Chapter 247, Statutes of 2021

SB 640 (Becker - D) authorizes local governments to sponsor local streets and roads projects to be jointly funded by the Road Repair and Accountability Act (SB 1, Beall, Chapter 5, Statutes of 2017). Signed by the Governor. Chapter 108, Statutes of 2021. ASCE Position: Support

SB 671 (Gonzalez - D) requires the CTC, in coordination with other state agencies, to develop a Clean Freight Corridor Efficiency Assessment and incorporate the recommendations into their respective programs for freight infrastructure; and codifies existing CTC guidelines for eligible projects for the Trade Corridor Enhancement Program (TCEP). Signed by the Governor ASCE Position: Watch

SB 776 (Gonzalez - D) makes changes to the statute that guides the implementation of the Safe and Affordable Drinking Water (SADW) Fund, including consolidating the State Water Resources Control Board's authority to enforce the terms, conditions, and requirements of its financial assistance programs. Signed by the Governor. Chapter 187, Statutes of 2021.

Reports of Interest
The Legislative Analyst's Office released “Reducing the Destructiveness of Wildfires: Promoting Defensible Space in California,” finds that efforts to enforce laws requiring homeowners “in certain areas at high risk of wildfires” to maintain zones around their homes free of “excess” vegetation are “complicated by the fragmented and overlapping nature of state and local responsibilities;” recommends state gather consistent data on defensible space inspections, increase funding for CalFire inspectors and support research on “strategies” to improve defensible space compliance.

Public Policy Institute of California released a policy brief that reports “Most Support California’s Leadership in Climate Change Policy,” cites its July survey and says “two in three adults and likely voters are in favor of the state government making its own policies, separate from the federal government, to address climate change;” also says 64% of likely voters support “the plan to ban the issuance of new fracking permits starting in 2024,” but “partisans disagree, with most Democrats and independents in favor and most Republicans opposed.”

Public Policy Institute of California released a report “Priorities for California’s Water,” finds successful implementation of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act’s “sustainability plans have some serious gaps—too much emphasis on new supply, not enough on reducing demand and insufficient attention to problems like impacts on shallow wells and land subsidence” and “has not adequately included small communities threatened by drying wells;” also finds “2017 failure of the Oroville Dam spillways highlighted the
need to upgrade existing infrastructure to better manage droughts and floods” and priorities for addressing upgrades include “dam safety, repairing existing conveyance systems (key for expanding groundwater recharge), dealing with the flood risks from deteriorating levees and sea level rise and upgrading water treatment systems.”

Legislative Analyst’s Office released “2022-23 Budget: California’s Fiscal Outlook,” forecasts: “state will have a $31 billion surplus to allocate in the upcoming fiscal year and operating surpluses ranging from $3 billion to $8 billion over the multiyear period;” also forecasts state will need to allocate about $14 billion of the projected surplus across fiscal years 2020-21 and 2021-22 to meet the constitutional requirements of the State Appropriation’s Limit; says to meet those requirements legislature can “(1) lower tax revenues; (2) split the excess revenues between additional school and community college district spending and taxpayer rebates or (3) appropriate more money for purposes excluded from the State Appropriation’s Limit.”

Appointments of Interest by the Governor
As deputy director for special initiatives, Dept. of Water Resources: Bianca Sievers, 31, Sacramento, no party preference, policy advisor to director of Dept. of Water Resources since 2018.


Reappointed to the Colorado River Basin Regional Water Quality Control Board: Nancy Wright, 71, Whitewater, Republican, co-owner at Peter Wright General Contractor since 1977.

To the Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Control Board: Gloria Alvarado, 53, Santa Ana, Democrat, executive director at the Orange County Labor Federation since 2018; John Scandura, 64, Huntington Beach, Republican, former branch chief for the Site Mitigation and Restoration Program at the Dept. of Toxic Substances Control.

Reappointed to the San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board: Betty Olson, 74, Trabuco Canyon, no party preference, professor emeritus in the Dept. of Civil and Environmental Engineering at the UC Irvine School of Engineering since 2018; Stefanie Warren, 43, San Diego, Democrat, partner at Trails Law Group since 2018.

Los Angeles Sustainability Leader Honored with Michel Award

ASCE has honored Emmanuel C. Battad “Cris” Liban, P.E., F.ASCE, with the 2022 Henry L. Michel Award for Industry Advancement of Research as a world-renowned leader in sustainability who tackles emerging and timely issues on social equity, resilience, sustainability and climate, climate change impacts, greenhouse gas emissions reduction strategies, life-cycle and cost framework, and sustainable transport funding and financing.

For over 17 years, Liban has developed a holistic environmental, sustainability, and resiliency program designed to cost-neutrally, climate-safely proof up to $140 billion in capital programs relative to the expansion of transit in Los Angeles County, the 16th largest economy in the world. He currently manages a team of 19 full-time Metro staff and at any given moment oversees an approximately 100-150 part-time to full-time consultant team working on 149 simultaneous projects that address all aspects of Metro environmental compliance and sustainability programs. He currently acts as the executive point of contact on issues of environment and sustainability, and interfaces with the general public and all appointed and elected officials at all levels (tribal, local, state, federal) of government. He develops the annual budget and strategic plan to achieve agency goals while ensuring equitable and inclusive participation by all parties.

Liban grew the ECSD department from a staff of four within an annual budget of approximately $4.5 million to the most comprehensive environmental program in the country (at least the transportation industry), with ~$250 million in sustainability capital backlog, approximately $100 million in generated revenues since 2017, and having been a net-zero cost L.A. Metro business unit since FY18. The forecast is for approximately $1.2 billion in potential revenues in development with a ~$450 million in cost savings projected over 30 years from environmental and sustainability monetized benefits. Liban’s focus areas include policy, climate change mitigation and adaptation, resiliency, energy, and energy efficient management (including renewable energy projects), water and water conservation, revenue generation, infrastructure funding and financing, training, environmental clearance and mitigation, environmental compliance, stakeholder engagement, and social sustainability initiatives.

The Henry L. Michel Award for Industry Advancement of Research was established in 1996 and is named in honor of Henry L. Michel, past chair of the Civil Engineering Research Foundation (CERF) Board of Directors. The award recognizes leaders of the design and construction industry whose dedication and aggressive vision for the industry have provided the cornerstones for improving the quality of people’s lives around the world through research in the design and construction industry. It was instituted as a Society Award on December 17, 2008.
Continued Learning and Setting Boundaries Are Keys to Career Growth

by Kush A. Vashee, P.E., CAPM, ENV SP, LEED Green Assoc., M.ASCE

What are the new responsibilities that come with being a project engineer? I will be leading design efforts on larger projects and coordinating with other disciplines in our company, which is something I'm really excited about. As a roadway engineer, I'll work with our water resources group to coordinate things like drainage conveyance and roadside ditches and also with our traffic group for things like pavement markings and traffic signals. I'll be making sure everyone's at the same stage and working together.

I'll also be able to mentor interns and entry-level engineers and do some quality control on some of their work, and I think that's cool. Coming from that background recently, I know how difficult it can be when you don't have a mentor or someone to ask questions of, so I hope to provide that.

Also, my supervisor just recently let me know that I'm going to be attending more client-facing meetings and coordinating with clients. Hopefully that will help me develop my management skills and facilitate my moving up in the company.

Will you be comfortable working directly with clients? Yes, I did a little of that before, at my very first job out of college. I was working on utility relocations for a site-development project, and one of the clients was Washington Gas, the local gas utility. There was a time when my division manager was on vacation, and my supervisor was out studying to take the P.E. exam, so I was the only person available to attend a couple of client meetings. I was still a graduate engineer at the time. I was terrified, but it was eye-opening.

And I did OK, so that led to my being able to attend more client meetings with my project manager. I was working on the plans while he worked on the management side of things.

What are the chief skills and abilities you developed in your previous positions that helped you get promoted? Getting better and more efficient at using software programs has definitely helped me. In my first job and in this one, I became proficient in AutoCAD Civil 3D, and in this job, I use MicroStation and OpenRoads. I have also improved my technical skills for specific clients like the Virginia DOT and (two local county departments of transportation); understanding the way different jurisdictions approach their projects is something I've looked for when she was reviewing plans, and how she was able to mentors, Lorainne Barksdale, P.E., CFM, who no longer works here, do and supported me and provided the help I needed. One of my mentors, Lorainne Barksdale, P.E., CFM, who no longer works here, would show me how she was responding to clients' emails, what she looked for when she was reviewing plans, and how she was able to mentor younger engineers while still getting her own work done. And even though she no longer works here, I contact her from time to time because that is a relationship that I want to keep for as long as possible.

What nontechnical skills have been important in your career? Set good personal boundaries. In my previous job, I struggled with no and that it is important to maintain your own personal health. And in terms of empathy, I feel like I relate well to people from different backgrounds. I grew up in Zambia and did some internships there, and there are a lot of differences in how people work. Certain things are valued more there that are valued less here and vice versa. That changed my perspective and helped me learn more about how to work together collectively for the good of a project.

What were the most valuable lessons you learned from mentors? The best mentors pushed me to do more than what I thought I could do and supported me and provided the help I needed. One of my mentors, Lorainne Barksdale, P.E., CFM, who no longer works here, would show me how she was responding to clients' emails, what she looked for when she was reviewing plans, and how she was able to mentor younger engineers while still getting her own work done. And even though she no longer works here, I contact her from time to time because that is a relationship that I want to keep for as long as possible.

What do you hope to accomplish in this new position? Honestly, I just want to do a good job. I want to deliver good projects, maintain the good relationships we have with clients, and then help all the engineers I work with succeed.

After that, my goal in the next couple of years is to go up those couple of rungs into project management. I'd like to manage small and large infrastructure projects as well as develop a team of my own.

What is your best advice for younger engineers right now? Set good personal boundaries. In my previous job, I struggled with saying no, and that led to a lot of stress. I learned that it is OK to say no and that it is important to maintain your own personal health.

Also, as a new engineer, don't be afraid to ask questions. No one is expecting you to know everything. And build trust with your team and supervisor by showing you are someone who can be relied upon. If you come upon a problem, try to suggest a solution and discuss it with your supervisor, so they see you are someone who is thinking proactively.

Vashee offers even more advice for younger engineers on his blog at kushvashee.com/blog.

This article first appeared in the July/August 2021 issue of Civil Engineering as “Keep a Growth Mindset and Lead with Empathy.”
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Reminder:
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