

San Geronio Pass Water Agency

DATE: January 6, 2025
TO: Board of Directors
FROM: Lance Eckhart, General Manager
BY: Lance Eckhart, General Manager
SUBJECT: DIRECTOR'S PRESENTATION: WATER EDUCATION FOR LATINO LEADERS (WELL) PROGRAM

RECOMMENDATION

This is a Board-related presentation and discussion; Staff have no recommendation.

PREVIOUS CONSIDERATION

- Board of Directors – July 10, 2023: The Board approved a request from Director Chander Letulle to participate in this program.

BACKGROUND

Director Ybarra was recently accepted to participate in the Winter 2025 AAPI UnTapped Fellowship Program that is sponsored by the Education for Latino Leaders (WELL) organization.

The cost of the program is \$4,000, and meetings will commence shortly. This program is similar in scope and practice to the program attended by Mr. Letulle in 2023, and consists of five in-person meetings in locations throughout California, with the possibility of additional teleconference meetings.

ANALYSIS

The Board has approved various policies and ordinances to guide Board members and Staff in making decisions about participation in various meetings and conferences, and consideration of the cost of such participation. The policies and ordinances guide the decision-making process for Board and Staff participation in various meetings, conferences, and programs. In addition, the Board reserves the right to approve programs not mentioned in these policies and ordinances that will benefit the Agency and the members of the Agency in the furtherance of its goals and objectives.

Specifically, the Board approved a similar program for a Board member in 2023.

Besides the educational benefit of the proposed program, the Board may also see this as an opportunity for additional networking and continued involvement with the Water for Latino Leaders organization, and their events and conferences. As mentioned in a

previous staff report, Mr. Letulle's completion of the fellowship paves the way for additional opportunities for Board member engagement.

STRATEGIC PLAN NEXUS

STRATEGIC GOAL 4: Serve the public with dedication, determination, transparency, collaboration, and a commitment to expanding knowledge.

Objective:

- Provide ongoing education to the Board of Directors on issues affecting the Agency and the regional water landscape.

STRATEGIC GOAL 6: Maintain, foster, and expand collaboration with local, regional, state and federal partners to develop strategic solutions to water supply challenges and opportunities.

Objective:

- Cultivate local, regional, state, and federal partnerships and identify opportunities to promote and expand collaboration with new or existing partners.

FISCAL IMPACT

In addition to the cost of the fellowship, Director Ybarra would be able to include these meetings on his monthly pay requests. An average of about two meeting-days per month could be included over the five-month period. Reimbursement for travel expenses for the meetings would also be expected.

The General Fund Budget for FY 2024-25 includes \$80,000 for Directors Travel and Education. As of November 30, 2024, approximately \$26,000 has been expended.

ACTION

Board decision.

ATTACHMENTS

Excerpt from Water Education for Latino Leaders website
Acceptance letter
Invoice



WELL UnTapped Fellowship Program

Applications for the WELL – AAPI UnTapped Fellowship are now open! Apply below! Water is one of the most important public policy issues in California and local Latino leaders are now emerging as key contributors in the water policy arena. Water Education for Latino Leaders (WELL) was founded in 2012 with the goal of strengthening the voice of local Latino leaders, ensuring they have context for and participation in water policy decisions. Latino and other people of color have been historically locked out of decision-making and leadership roles, particularly on the issue of water policy. Latinos represent nearly 40 percent of California's population but only account for 2 percent of elected water officials and water policy professionals. WELL believes that the next generation of leaders should reflect the diversity of California and that they should have the knowledge and expertise about water issues that will make them more effective in leading water policy.

WELL UnTapped

Building on its success in water education, WELL launched **WELL UnTapped**, a selective, six-month program for local elected leaders aimed at helping participants make an impact on California water policy while addressing individual community water challenges. The UnTapped program creates an opportunity for local leaders to engage with water issues through a comprehensive and active exploration of history, governance, public policy, geography, and economics and their relationship to human rights and climate change.

The overarching goal of the WELL UnTapped fellowship program is to give local elected officials a deeper understanding of the fundamentals of water policy and governance. UnTapped sessions are held at different watersheds throughout California, and session content includes lectures given by water professionals and skill-based exercises that help participants ask better public policy questions and strengthen public leadership and relational skills. Upon completing the program, fellows will have gained the following skills:

Public Narrative: An evidence-based method to engage others in organizing work. The method, developed by Marshall Ganz, an organizer and lecturer at Harvard Kennedy School of Government, comes out of his theory of *strategic capacity*. Through practicing what Ganz coined the Story of Self, Story of Us, and Story of Now, fellows hone critical *public leadership skills* and learn how to *recruit important allies* to build a team of concerned and willing leaders. Through the process of Public Narrative, WELLos share what motivated them to become a local elected official and what prompts them to continue. This motivation engages like-minded individuals to join them in not only improving their community's water situation but improving the outcomes for all kinds of issues.

WELL Method of Inquiry: The Method of Inquiry is modeled after established teaching models that develop analytic skills to deal with complex fact situations. It is assumed that UnTapped fellows already possess many of these skills acquired through experience and common sense problem-solving in their personal and professional lives. The Method of Inquiry will build on those skills. It is also assumed that while fellows may have the experience

to varying degrees in dealing with complex water issues, they do not have the time to become experts in the field of water policy and management in California or even experts within their own communities. The objective of the Method of Inquiry is to give each fellow the skills needed to ask questions of water experts, organize the relevant facts, recognize what is unknown, find out where to get the information needed to make intelligent choices about complex water policy and management issues, and as necessary, how to lead communities in better planning and managing water supplies and water quality.

Legislative Water Workshop Project: Led by UnTapped Fellowship graduates, the Legislative Water Workshop capstone project gives graduates an opportunity to work with their California state legislators to share educational discussions with the local elected officials in the legislative district regarding the water issues impacting their region.

Once fellows graduate from UnTapped, they are inducted into the [WELL UnTapped Network \(WUN\)](#), where they can continue engaging in learning and training opportunities about California water policy. Graduates of the WELL UnTapped Fellowship program are referred to as WELLO's and to date WELL has graduated a total of 45 elected officials from throughout California.

Join WELL UnTapped's statewide network of Latino elected leaders. Learn from each other. Leverage the Power of UnTapped. Together we can make a difference in our communities and help address one of the most critical issues of our day.



Robert Ybarra
Boardmember
San Geronio Pass Water Agency
1210 Beaumont Ave,
Beaumont, CA 92223

Dear Mr. Ybarra,

Congratulations!

On behalf of Water Education for Latino Leaders (WELL), I am pleased to inform you that you have been accepted as a Fellow for the Winter 2025 WELL UnTapped Fellowship Program. We received several applications this year and you were selected from a competitive group of elected leaders. Your application and interview demonstrated a true passion for protecting our environment and advancing your community's interests. We look forward to the synergy from your cohort's dynamic experience and backgrounds.

This is the ninth cohort of the WELL UnTapped Fellowship. By accepting to be a part of next year's cohort you will be a part of a vigorous group made up of other local elected officials to learn and discuss some of the state's most pressing water policies. Your participation in WELL UnTapped will play a significant role in preparing our state as it faces the fourth year of drought and many other water challenges in the coming years. WELL staff will provide you with the social media kit for sharing your acceptance into the program.

To confirm your participation in the program, these are the next steps:

1. Sign a copy of the acceptance letter with the link emailed to you.
2. Sign the WELL Photograph & Video Release Form so that we may include you in the press release announcing the next WELL UnTapped Fellowship cohort and use your image when referencing the program.
3. Submit your onboarding documents.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me at (909) 670-2928.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul C. Hernandez", written over a light blue circular stamp.

Paul C. Hernandez
Executive Director

WELL Board of Directors: Victor R. Griego, Jr. [Founder and President, WELL](#), Miguel A. Luna, [Principal of Urban Semillas](#), Cástulo R. Estrada, [Vice President, Coachella Valley Water District](#), Tony Estremera, [Director, Santa Clara Valley Water District](#), Irais Lopez-Ortega, [Councilmember, City of Calistoga](#), Joone Kim Lopez, [General Manager, Moulton Niguel Water District](#), Diana Mahmud, [Councilmember, City of South Pasadena](#), Gary Serrato, [Former General Manager, Fresno Irrigation District](#)

930 Colorado Blvd., Building 1, Los Angeles, CA 90041 | 909.670.2928 | www.latinosforwater.org



Invoice

Date	Invoice #
12/18/2024	2024-67

Water Education for Latino Leaders

930 Colorado Blvd Building 1
Los Angeles, CA 90041
Federal Tax ID No:84-3563310

Bill To
San Gorginio Pass Water Agency Robert Ybarra 1210 Beaumont Ave, Beaumont, CA 92223

Quantity	Description	Rate	Amount
1	WELL UnTapped Fellowship Program - January 2025 - May 2025 Pricing includes: - 5 in-person Water Education Sessions - Hotel accomadations	4,000.00	4,000.00
<p>Make all checks payable to Water Education for Latino Leaders If you have any questions concerning this invoice, contact Marrisa Stanley, Marissa@latinosforwater.org or 909-670-2928</p>		Total	\$4,000.00