

South Bay Association of Chambers of Commerce Report – Covering May 2025

Submitted by: Barry Waite

On behalf of the South Bay Association of Chambers of Commerce (SBACC), representing 17 chambers and businesses across the South Bay, I'm pleased to share highlights from our May 2025 Board Meeting, held in-person at the SBCCOG Office in Torrance. This report outlines key discussions, legislative updates, and upcoming initiatives, reflecting our shared commitment to advancing economic vitality and regional collaboration with the SBCCOG.

Meeting Overview

- **Format and Attendance:** The meeting, chaired by Kimberly Caceres, marked SBACC's transition to alternating in-person (odd months) and hybrid (even months) formats, with breakfast provided and RSVPs required. Attendees included board members, chamber representatives, and community partners, fostering robust dialogue on regional priorities.

Key Highlights

1. Guest Speaker – Charles Gale, Metropolitan Water District (MWD)

- Gale provided an overview of MWD's water sources (Colorado River, State Water Project) and highlighted recent atmospheric river storms boosting availability.
- He introduced the Pure Water Southern California Project in Carson, a major recycling initiative to reduce reliance on imported water, aligning with SBCCOG's sustainability goals.
- Gale discussed MWD's climate adaptation planning, integrating resilience into infrastructure, and requested SBACC's support via a policy engagement letter, which we are reviewing for alignment with our advocacy priorities.

2. Government Affairs Report (Henry Rogers)

- **Legislative Focus:** SBACC discussed several bills critical to South Bay businesses, including:
 - **AB 265 (Caloza):** Establishes a \$100 million Small Business Recovery Fund for disaster-affected businesses, supported for its job retention and equity focus.
 - **AB 605 (Muratsuchi):** Incentivizes low-emission port equipment, supported for balancing emissions reduction with economic competitiveness.
 - **SB 38 (Umberg):** Expands Second Chance Program grants for mental health and drug courts, supported for workforce reintegration.
 - **SB 70 (Seyarto):** Raises small business contract thresholds to \$350,000, supported for reducing procurement barriers.
 - **SB 86 (McNerney):** Extends clean energy tax exclusions, supported for job creation in manufacturing.

- **SB 298 (Caballero):** Mandates a seaport alternative fuels plan, supported for port competitiveness and emissions cuts.
- **SB 404 (Caballero):** Regulates metal shredding facilities, supported for environmental clarity and recycling viability.
- **SB 419 (Caballero):** Exempts hydrogen fuel from state taxes, supported for cost savings in logistics.
- **2025 State Budget:** Rogers noted the budget's focus on fiscal resilience, addressing a \$44 billion deficit with a \$16 billion reserve, prioritizing education, climate, housing, and public safety—key SBACC and SBCCOG concerns.
- **Wildfire Funding:** A \$2.5 billion package was approved, with \$1 billion for immediate relief and \$1.5 billion for preparedness, resonating with our disaster resilience advocacy.
- **South Bay Legislators:** Local legislators secured influential committee roles in tax policy, infrastructure, and environmental compliance, enhancing our region's voice.
- **Advocacy Events:** Registration opened for SBACC's Days of Advocacy (April 21–22, 2025) in Sacramento, featuring legislative meetings and a WSPA briefing, complementing SBCCOG's regional advocacy efforts.

3. Office Holder and Partner Updates

- Representatives from the U.S. Chamber, League of California Cities, MWD, South Coast AQMD, and offices of Supervisors Hahn and Mitchell, Congressmembers Waters, Lieu, and Barragán, and Senators Allen, Richardson, and Gonzalez provided brief reports.
- Assemblymember Muratsuchi's office highlighted AB 49 (school safety) and AB 84 (charter school audits), plus upcoming events like an E-Bike Town Hall (March 22) and Wildfire Preparedness Event (April 26).
- South Coast AQMD offered free business training on air quality compliance, a resource SBACC will promote to members, supporting SBCCOG's environmental initiatives.

4. Chair's Report (Kimberly Caceres)

- **Bylaws and Website Updates:** Committees are modernizing bylaws and enhancing the SBACC website for better member engagement, with updates due by April.
- **Summer Mixer:** Planning is underway for a networking event at South Coast Botanic Garden (August 22 or 29, 2025), fostering business connections aligned with SBCCOG's community-building goals.