

1 EAST CHICAGO WATERWAY MANAGEMENT
2 DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTOR'S MEETING
3 CITY OF EAST CHICAGO, ENGINEERING/ANNEX BUILDING
4 4444 RAILROAD AVENUE
5 EAST CHICAGO, INDIANA
6 January 15, 2026
7 THURSDAY 5:00 P.M.

8
9 TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS had in the
10 above-entitled matter on the 15th day of January, 2026
11 at 5:00 p.m. held at the City of East Chicago
12 Engineering/Annex Building, 444 Railroad Avenue, East
13 Chicago, Indiana.

A P P E A R A N C E

MR. JOHN FEKETE, PRESIDENT

MR. HENRY RODRIGUEZ, BOARD MEMBER

MR. RAY LOPEZ, BOARD MEMBER

MR. JAYLAN ROBINSON, BOARD MEMBER

MR. FERNANDO TREVINO, FMT CONSULTING

MS. ELLEN GREGORY, ELLEN GREGORY LAW

ALSO PRESENT:

MS. VANESSA VARGAS, CLA

MR. VAUGHN COOLMAN, ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

MS. CAROL NEESON

MR. BOB SANTORI

MS. SHANNON FLANAGAN

MR. TIM DAHL

1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 MR. FEKETE: Okay. I'd like to call to order
3 the Chicago Waterway Management District Board of
4 Directors regular Public Board meeting. Today's date
5 is January 15th and the time is 5:06.

6 First order of business is the roll call.
7 Jalan Robinson?

8 MR. ROBINSON: Here.

9 MR. FEKETE: John Bakota? Henry Rodriguez?

10 MR. RODRIGUEZ: Here.

11 MR. FEKETE: Ray Lopez?

12 MR. LOPEZ: Here.

13 MR. FEKETE: We have a quorum. Next order of
14 business is Executive Director's Report. Mr. Trevino?

15 MR. TREVINO: Yes. Fernando Trevino, FMT
16 Consulting. I'd like to start off by going over the
17 contents of your Board packet. And I'm going to
18 summarize the Board packet as it was updated earlier
19 today.

20 You have a copy of today's agenda. You have
21 a copy of the public meeting posting for today's
22 meeting. Copy of the Board minutes for December 18th
23 Board meeting.

24 Copy of the CliftonLarsonAllen financial

1 report dated December 31, 2025 for the month of
2 December.

3 You have a copy of today's claim docket dated
4 January 15, 2026, along with copies of the purchase
5 orders and the check register.

6 You have a copy of a letter dated January 15,
7 2026 from the Board President to US Army Corps of
8 Engineers Project Manager, Natalie Mills, regarding the
9 District's no objection for the use of the local CDF.

10 You have an email dated January 14, 2026 from
11 the City's Chief of Staff giving the District the green
12 light to pursue a Brownfield grant.

13 You have an email also dated January 14,
14 2026, from AECOM summarizing the Brownfield grant
15 process.

16 You have First Merchants Bank statements for
17 the month of December 2025 for accounts ending in 616
18 and the user fee deposits made in December and account
19 ending in 608. Along with the copies of checks that
20 were processed during the month of December.

21 You have a copy of BMO's non-trust report
22 summarizing our CDs. BMO's trust reports dated
23 December 31, 2025.

24 You have a copy of Tetra Tech's Monthly

1 Progress Report, invoice and budget summary for the
2 month of December dated December 31, 2025.

3 You have a copy of the Army Corps Report to
4 the Board dated January 15, 2026.

5 You have a copy of Attorney Ellen Gregory's
6 Monthly Report to the Board with a revision date of
7 January 14, 2026.

8 You have emails from earlier this month to
9 and from NOAA N-O-A-A related to the Canal Street
10 Bridge Project requesting a permit status report on
11 documents they were requesting. Basically NOAA
12 confirmed that they have received all necessary
13 documents.

14 You have a draft letter to the Senators from
15 the State of Indiana supporting reauthorization of the
16 GLRI projects.

17 That concludes the items in your Board
18 packet. To go over a couple of things regarding the
19 action items on today's meeting agenda, we have the two
20 routine monthly action items which are the Board
21 minutes for the December 18 Board meeting and the
22 monthly claim docket with today's date and then two
23 other action items. There's the no objection letter
24 from the District to the Army Corps for the use of the

1 CDF for the Great Lake Legacy Act Project. And then
2 you have a Brownfield Grant application approval.

3 Regarding the District's finances this month.
4 Our CliftonLarsonAllen Financial Report contains a
5 summary of the 2025 budget and a second table
6 reflecting the 2026 budget. Vanessa can elaborate on
7 that during her report.

8 Regarding user fees, the 2025 user fee
9 collection process is ongoing. Last month the Board
10 approved extending the deadline to the end of this
11 month, January 30th. We have collected approximately
12 388,000, which is around 91% of the total, and that
13 includes the checks that were received recently.

14 Regarding the unpaid accounts, I've been able
15 to contact a representative from each of the companies
16 except one. Those that I did contact have demonstrated
17 a good faith effort to date to pay their unpaid
18 balance. However, the one company that I wasn't able
19 to contact may be problematic. So we may have to
20 implement our collection process on one of the
21 accounts, but I will keep trying.

22 Regarding the Great Lakes Legacy Act
23 Projects. So great news. I'm thrilled to share some
24 exciting news about our Great Lakes Legacy Act

1 Projects. On Friday, December 19, the project
2 agreement between EPA the District ARBP was officially
3 approved and signed by the EPA. This milestone marks
4 the formal launch of a major environmental restoration
5 effort with a total project budget of approximately
6 \$200 million. The project encompasses the full
7 footprint of the Grand Cal River Junction reaches and
8 includes the Lake George Canal east and west branches.

9 The project represents a major step forward
10 in revitalizing our waterways. This accomplishment is
11 a testament to the District's long standing commitment
12 and collaboration with our federal, state and local
13 partners and it sets the stage for future economic
14 growth and enhanced recreational opportunities
15 throughout our community. So congratulations to the
16 District's Board of Directors and everyone involved in
17 achieving this remarkable success. I've been working
18 closely with EPA and ARBP to develop a joint press
19 release highlighting this achievement, which will be
20 shared soon.

21 As a related note, just a reminder, the
22 District in early December of last year withdrew our
23 dispute resolution process with ARBP that was initiated
24 last year.

1 So update on the Projects related to the
2 Great Lakes Legacy Act Projects the Lake George Canal
3 East and Middle Projects, the design of the South Tank
4 Farm Barrier Wall System Groundwater Management design
5 is ongoing. ARBP has reported that the design is at
6 60%.

7 Regarding the Lake George Canal East, the
8 Corps is managing the dredging project and they
9 continue to work on the design of the dredging. Phase
10 II of the Lake George Canal East dredging is scheduled
11 to be accomplished in 2026. The project is exploring
12 the use of the local CDF to dispose of materials
13 dredged from this project and as I mentioned, there's a
14 letter on today's agenda related to using the CDF.

15 The Cleveland Cliff CEP dredging is now
16 forecasted to be done in 2027.

17 Regarding the Lake George Canal Middle Cap
18 Project, the Army Corps of Engineers is managing this
19 project on behalf of EPA. The CAP construction has
20 been completed and Eco construction activities are
21 periodically ongoing. The project team is working on
22 an adaptive management plan to address oil sheens in
23 this section of the waterway.

24 Regarding the Lake George Canal West

1 Remediation Project, that work is ongoing and that
2 project is between BP and EPA. Based on the latest
3 site characterization data of the Lake George Canal
4 West Section, BP recommended no further action is
5 necessary.

6 The Army Corps of Engineers and EPA continue
7 to assess BP's no further action recommendation which
8 is currently expected to include additional sampling.

9 Regarding the Grand Cal River Junction
10 Reaches Project, Tetra Tech remedial design work is
11 ongoing. We're currently reviewing and incorporating
12 comments to the 90% design. Some of the ongoing
13 project activities include completing the remedial
14 design, property access coordination, coordination for
15 completing the Junction Marsh or including the Junction
16 Marsh coordination with the former City Dump Site and
17 the Marquette Trail Project, community engagement and
18 going through various permit applications including the
19 TSCA permit.

20 Project Manager for Tetra Tech, Carol Neeson,
21 is in attendance today and will provide additional
22 updates regarding Great Lakes Legacy Act Work In Kind
23 reporting. In October of last year, I submitted a
24 letter report to EPA requesting that the City's work on

1 the City Dump Project count as Work In Kind. EPA is
2 close to completing that assessment. EPA's current
3 assessment is that they will approve the expenses as
4 cost share credit.

5 I also continue to work on putting together
6 another Work In Kind request related to the City's
7 combined sewer overflow project and that work is
8 ongoing. I plan to start working on the District's
9 2025 year-end Work In Kind Report and EPA's review
10 continues on our 2024 and prior year Work In Kind
11 Reports.

12 Regarding the Canal Street Bridge project, we
13 received a permit status report update request from
14 NOAA, which is National Oceanic and Atmospheric
15 Administration, request certain project data and after
16 looking into the matter and emailing back and forth to
17 NOAA, they agreed that we properly notified them that
18 the project was completed. And NOAA concluded that we
19 provided all project documentation necessary after our
20 completion. And a copy of those emails are in your
21 packet.

22 Nothing new to report on the Old Cline Avenue
23 bridge demolition.

24 Regarding the Army Corps of Engineers, that

1 report is in your packet. Project Manager, Vaughn
2 Coolman, should be on, is on and will be providing an
3 update to the Board. And Attorney Ellen Gregory will
4 give an update on various legal matters. And that
5 concludes my report.

6 MR. FEKETE: Any questions for Mr. Trevino?
7 Thank you.

8 Next item is the approval consideration of
9 Board minutes meeting notes for our last meeting,
10 December 15, 2025. I'll entertain a Motion to Approve.

11 MR. RODRIGUEZ: Motion to Approve.

12 MR. FEKETE: Have a second.

13 MR. ROBINSON: Second.

14 MR. FEKETE: Okay. All in favor signify by
15 saying "aye".

16 (A CHORUS OF AYES)

17 MR. ROBINSON: Any oppositions, abstentions.
18 Hearing none, the motion is approved.

19 Next order is the Accounting Consultant
20 Report.

21 MS. VARGAS: Yes. Well, Happy New Year to
22 everyone. In front of you, you, have a copy of the
23 financial statements on a cash basis dated December 31,
24 2025. If you turn to Page 2, we will begin with a

1 Statement of Cash Receipts and Cash Disbursements for
2 the 12 months ended December 31, 2025. You received
3 interest income for the year in the amount of
4 \$497,884.17.

5 You collected User Fees in the amount of
6 \$376,346.01.

7 You also had a trust transfer in the amount
8 of \$7,437.30. This brings your total receipts to
9 \$881,667.48.

10 Your total cash disbursements for the year
11 was \$690,524.64. This brings you to an overall
12 increase in cash in the amount of \$191,142.84.

13 Your cash balance on January 1, 2025 totaled
14 \$14,760,488.82. And your cash balance as of
15 December 31, 2025 was \$14,951,631.66.

16 If you turn to Page 3, we will continue with
17 the schedule of cash account activity for the 12 months
18 ended December 31, 2025. Your operating account began
19 the year with a cash balance on January 1st in the
20 amount of \$892,511.65. You had total deposits in the
21 amount of \$1,106,365.30 as well as cash disbursements
22 in the amount of \$690,774.74, bringing your operating
23 cash balance as of December 31st to \$1,308,102.21.

24 Your User Fee account began the year with a

1 cash balance on January 1st in the amount of
2 \$13,867,977.17. You had total cash receipts of
3 \$585,953.07, as well as cash disbursements totaling
4 \$12,553,693.53, which brings your User Fee account
5 balance as of December 31st to \$1,900,236.71.

6 You began the year with no CDs, with the
7 purchase of a CD and the interest earned. Your CD
8 balance as of December 31st is \$11,743,292.74.

9 If you turn to Page 4, we will continue with
10 the schedule of 2025 available budget as of
11 January 15, 2026. Your 2025 budget appropriation
12 totaled \$1,718,525. Adding back in accounts payable
13 dated 12/31/2024 in the amount of \$61,067.48 as well as
14 budget amendments totaling \$174,000, brought your 2025
15 total appropriation to \$1,953,592.48.

16 Your cash disbursements for the 12 months
17 ended December 2025 to totaled \$690,474.64.

18 In front of you, you have a claims docket
19 dated January 15, 2026 with a total of \$70,695.50 going
20 towards the 2025 budget, which would bring your unused
21 budget for 2025 to \$1,192,422.34.

22 If you turn to the next page, as Fernando
23 mentioned, you have a new schedule on these financial
24 statements for the 2026 available budget.

1 As of January 15, 2026, your 2026 budget
2 totaled \$1,553,089. Adding back in the accounts
3 payable from the previous page of 12/31/2025 totaling
4 \$70,695.50. Brings your 2026 appropriation budget to
5 \$1,623,784.50.

6 Included in your claims docket dated January
7 15, 2026, you also have a check for \$1,103 for your
8 office lease, which is going against your 2026 budget.
9 This brings your unused budget for 2026 to
10 \$1,622,681.50. Are there any questions?

11 MR. FEKETE: Hearing none, thank you,
12 Vanessa.

13 The next order of business is the Approval
14 Consideration for the Accounts Payable Voucher dated
15 today's date January 15, 2026. I'll entertain a
16 motion.

17 MR. LOPEZ: Motion to approve.

18 MR. FEKETE: Have a second?

19 MR. RODRIGUEZ: Second.

20 MR. FEKETE: I have a second. We'll have a
21 roll call vote. Jalan Robinson?

22 MR. ROBINSON: Yes.

23 MR. FEKETE: John Bakota? Henry Rodriguez?

24 MR. RODRIGUEZ: Yes.

1 MR. FEKETE: Ray Lopez?

2 MR. LOPEZ: Yes.

3 MR. FEKETE: John Fekete. I vote yes. That
4 motion is approved.

5 The next order of business is the no
6 objection letter for the user of the CDF.

7 MR. TREVINO: So, as I mentioned in my
8 report, the Army Corps of Engineers requested a letter
9 that we do not object to using the local confined
10 disposal facility for disposal of material affiliated
11 with the Lake George Canal East Dredging Project. So
12 we have submitted similar letters in the past. So the
13 framework is pretty much the same as what we've done in
14 the past. And it's consistent with our policy that
15 only East Chicago material can go into the CDF. And
16 that's what we communicated in the letter saying that
17 we have no objection of putting that material into the
18 local CDF. So the recommendation is to approve the
19 letter.

20 MR. FEKETE: Okay. I'll have a Motion to
21 Approve the letter.

22 MR. RODRIGUEZ: Motion to Approve.

23 MR. FEKETE: Do I have a second?

24 MR. LOPEZ: Second.

1 MR. FEKETE: All in favor, signify by saying
2 "aye".

3 (A CHORUS OF AYES)

4 MR. FEKETE: Any objections? Abstentions?
5 That motion is approved.

6 The next order of business is the approval
7 consideration for the Brownfields Grant application.
8 Mr. Trevino?

9 MR. TREVINO: Yes. The Board might recall
10 that we've been working on conducting an economic and
11 recreational assessment along the waterway with the
12 consideration that our waterways will be substantially
13 cleaned in a couple years. And I mentioned the recent
14 success on the \$200 million project agreement to clean
15 our waterways. So it's kind of that philosophy that we
16 start evaluating what are the options and opportunities
17 that we can tap into considering the waterways be clean
18 in the coming years. And we recently identified that
19 this project, the economic and recreational development
20 assessment may be able to be funded through a
21 Brownfields Grant. After several meetings with
22 representatives from the City, AECOM and NIRPC and
23 NIRPC N-I-R-P-C, we concluded that the District does
24 have a good opportunity of being successful in

1 submitting a Brownsfields grant. The work will involve
2 cooperation from the City. So we wanted to make sure
3 we had the City's support. After careful consideration
4 in various meetings, the City gave the District the
5 green light to submit an application. The application
6 may be submitted individually by the District or it
7 also may be submitted a coalition. So we're -- we're
8 exploring various options and the timeline is very
9 tight. The application deadline is January 28th. So
10 I'm asking that the Board when they approve the
11 Brownfields Grant applications, that it includes the
12 approval of delegating me and Board President Fekete
13 the authority to act on behalf of the District to work
14 on approving, sign necessary documents to submit the
15 grant.

16 MR. FEKETE: I'll entertain a Motion to
17 Approve.

18 MR. RODRIGUEZ: Motion to Approve.

19 MR. FEKETE: I think you spoke over each
20 other.

21 MR. LOPEZ: He made the recommendation and
22 then I made the motion, I seconded.

23 MR. TREVINO: So it was motion by Henry
24 second by ray.

1 MR. FEKETE: All in favor signify by saying
2 "aye".

3 (A CHORUS OF AYES)

4 MR. FEKETE: Any oppositions? Abstentions?
5 Hearing none. That motion is approved.

6 Our next order of business is the BMO Trust
7 and Non-trust reports. Mr. Santori.

8 MR. SANTORI: Good evening everybody. Yeah,
9 I'll go over the Trust Report first ending 12/31/25.

10 MR. TREVINO: Hang on, Bob? We couldn't hear
11 you over there.

12 MR. SANTORI: Okay. Yeah. I'll start over.
13 You guys ready?

14 MR. TREVINO: Yes.

15 MR. LOPEZ: Okay. Yes, I'll go over the
16 Trust Report first. This page is showing your combined
17 balance of the Money Market and Certificate of Deposit
18 for the trust account. The value on 12/31 was
19 \$4,218,024.71. You had interest earnings on the
20 Certificate of Deposit of \$38,306.10 and interest
21 earnings on the Money Market account of \$530.38. So
22 for a total of interest earned of \$38,836.48 for the
23 month of December. The next CD interest earning date
24 will be March 18, 2026.

1 The second page of the Trust Report is
2 showing the historical distributions data. So for the
3 year ended in 2025, distributions for this past year
4 was \$7,437.30.

5 The second report you have is for the East
6 Chicago Waterway Management District CDs. There was no
7 change in the value of those CDs. And year end, the
8 balance, the combined balance of those accounts was
9 \$11,743,292.74. The next interest earning date for
10 those CDs will be February 23, 2026.

11 I believe that covers all the reports. If
12 you have any questions, I'm happy to answer those for
13 you.

14 MR. FEKETE: Any questions for Mr. Santori?
15 Okay, well, thank you. Thank you, Jim.

16 Okay, next order of business is Great Lakes
17 Legacy Act. Grand Cal Junction Reaches Project Update.

18 MR. TREVINO: Carol, you with us?

19 MS. NEESON: Yeah. Hi, everybody. Happy New
20 Year. The update on the Grand Cal Junction Reaches
21 Project. We ran several iterations of the surface
22 water model to identify design changes that will
23 address the potential for flooding along the IHC. So
24 we finally identified the problem area and the

1 solution, and now we are going through the design
2 changes to accommodate that change. We've also been
3 working on property access issues and updating permit
4 applications as Fernando said. Any questions?

5 MR. FEKETE: Any questions for Ms. Neeson?
6 Okay, well. Thank you very much.

7 MR. TREVINO: Hey, Carol.

8 MS. NEESON: Yes.

9 MR. TREVINO: Just one thing. That before
10 our February meeting, we need to evaluate the Tetra
11 Tech contract to see if it needs to be updated for 2026
12 or can the existing one continue. Okay, so I know you
13 and I talked about that a little bit, but we need to,
14 you know, go through that exercise to make sure that if
15 it does need to be updated or not.

16 MS. NEESON: Okay, we'll do.

17 MR. FEKETE: Thank you. And the next order
18 of business is the Army Corps of Engineers Board
19 Report.

20 MR. COOLMAN: Good evening, everyone. I'm a
21 little bit under the weather, so I had to do it
22 remotely today and Go Bears. So starting off with the
23 report, the water treatment plant is going to be
24 operational starting in the month of April. They took

1 a break over the winter due to weather, but should be
2 starting up in April. And for the dyke raise, we're
3 still going through some closeout documents with the
4 contractor. And for dredging, the current contract
5 advertisement has been solicited and we do have, I
6 think we submitted an amendment today or it'll go live
7 tomorrow. The bid opening is scheduled for
8 January 29th and that's about it. We have the oil boom
9 coordination. We're still managing that as needed.
10 Same with Parkway maintenance. Does anyone have any
11 questions for me?

12 MR. FEKETE: Any questions for Mr. Coolman?
13 Okay.

14 MR. TREVINO: Hope you feel better, Vaughn.
15 Thank you.

16 MR. FEKETE: Very good. Moving along.
17 Attorney Ellen Gregory Report.

18 MS. GREGORY: Ellen Gregory with Ellen
19 Gregory Law. It's been kind of a slow one, but I've
20 been working with Mr. Trevino on providing comments to
21 the Great Lakes Legacy Act Project GPA Press Release as
22 well as working with Fernando on the letters to the
23 Indiana Senators regarding the DLRI reauthorization and
24 the no objection letter to the Corps regarding the Lake

1 George Canal East placement of the dredging material
2 into the CDF.

3 MR. FEKETE: Very good. Any other business
4 to come before the Board?

5 MR. TREVINO: Yes. I just wanted to
6 introduce -- we talked about the Brownfields branch
7 application earlier and I wanted to introduce Tim Dahl
8 and Shannon Flanagan with AECOM. They're attending
9 today's meeting. Tim or Shannon, did you guys want to
10 add anything to the update I provided earlier?

11 MS. FLANAGAN: Nothing other than it was a
12 great update and I'm looking forward to working
13 together to advance this exciting grant opportunity.
14 It's an important project and we feel good about the
15 story we can tell and hopefully -- it's pretty
16 competitive. I guess I'll add that. So this year in
17 particular is a good one to go after a grant because
18 it's the last year for additional funding from the
19 IEPA. If you recall, the Infrastructure Investment and
20 Jobs Act infused an extra about 200 million into the
21 Brownfields funding and that expires after this year.
22 So it's a really great year for us to look at this
23 opportunity. There's about 70 grants that will be
24 awarded for community, 39 for the coalition. And so

1 yeah, we'll do our best to be competitive. And I think
2 the fact that there's already a lot of investment from
3 EPA for these earlier remediation phases I think tells
4 an important story. And then looking holistically at
5 the next steps for the community, I think really shows
6 nicely.

7 So, yeah, we'll work together. There's a lot
8 of things to pull together. So thanks to the Board
9 for, you know, delegating and saying yes to us moving
10 forward with this. And we'll work with Fernando to get
11 all the pieces together.

12 MR. TREVINO: Thank you, Shannon.

13 MR. FEKETE: Yeah, thank you. I'd like to
14 pass along our appreciation for the work that you have
15 done in the last few days. It's been sort of a
16 compressed time schedule that you've had to operate
17 under. And I think you've done a very good job of
18 pulling together not only your presentation, but
19 working with the other folks in the coalition and look
20 forward to some successes. So, again, thank you very
21 much.

22 MS. FLANAGAN: Yeah, you're welcome. Thank
23 you.

24 MR. DAHL: Yeah. Thanks for the opportunity.

1 MR. TREVINO: Okay, thanks. Thanks, folks.

2 MR. FEKETE: That's it. Any other business?
3 Public comments?

4 The next Public Board Meeting is February 19,
5 2026 at 5:00 p.m. at this facility. I'll entertain a
6 Motion for Adjournment.

7 MR. RODRIGUEZ: Motion to adjourn.

8 MR. FEKETE: Have a second.

9 MR. LOPEZ: Second.

10 MR. FEKETE: All those in favor, signify by
11 saying "aye".

12 (A CHORUS OF AYES)

13 MR. FEKETE: Meeting adjourned.

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16 (WHEREUPON the meeting was
17 adjourned at 5:40 p.m.)

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1 STATE OF INDIANA)

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3 COUNTY OF LAKE)

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5 C E R T I F I C A T E

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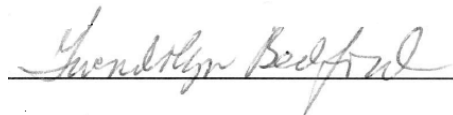
7 The within and foregoing meeting was taken
8 before GWENDOLYN BEDFORD, Certified Shorthand Reporter
9 in the City of Gary, County of Lake and State of
10 Indiana.

11 The undersigned is not interested in the
12 within meeting, nor of kin or counsel to any of the
13 members.

14 IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my
15 hand this 19th day of January, 2026.

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GWENDOLYN BEDFORD, C.S.R.

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No. 084-003700

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