

## MEMORANDUM

To: All Councilmembers

From: CURO By: Jared Reese

CC: Justyn Hawkins and Anita Curran

Date: June 25, 2025

RE: The Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans Meeting 06/25/2025

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### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans (SWBNO) Board of Directors met on Wednesday, June 25, 2025. The Executive Director provided comprehensive updates on major infrastructure projects and operational initiatives. The complete packet for the meeting may be found [here](#).

#### A. Power Complex

SWBNO announced the power complex began the operational testing phase. The company worked with contractors to complete connections between the Entergy substation and the intermediate control center, which required testing of conductor systems, control systems, and relays prior to bringing SFC 1 online. SWBNO planned to begin a 30-day operational test period after completing the next 2.5 weeks of system integration work. The organization scheduled SFC 1 energization from the substation into the facility by mid-July, which would connect the system to the grid for the first time. SWBNO staff coordinated with contract personnel during the test period, with the goal of achieving 24/7 operations on SFC 1. The organization planned to conduct system adjustments and adjustments during the successful 30-day test period, followed by official load testing of SFC 1 to its capacity using specialized load bank equipment. SWBNO scheduled SFC 2 to come online at the end of August or early September; SFC 3 following in September. The organization planned to begin testing and operational periods for Turbine 7 around October 1st.

SWBNO secured additional capital outlay funding during the legislative session. The company acquired \$18 million from the legislature, bringing total cash funding to \$50 million plus \$3 million in capital. The organization also submitted a formal application to the Department of Natural Resources for an additional \$34 million grant to complete the power complex Phase 2.

#### B. Infrastructure Investment and Revenue

SWBNO reported total revenue since program inception of slightly more than \$82 million, with expenditures of slightly less than \$53 million. The organization allocated approximately \$79.3 million and awarded design contracts during fiscal year 2025 Q1 and Q2, primarily for the smart

meter program with less than \$2 million directed to the power complex. SWBNO maintained the revenue split with 25% of funds going to the Public Works Department and 75% retained by the Water Board. The organization tracked monthly allocations from January through April, maintaining the established split between the two.

#### C. Smart Metering Program and Customer Portal

SWBNO installed approximately 120,000 smart meters out of 140,000 total meters, approximately 83% of the overall customers. The organization activated 1.5 million online accounts with customers averaging about 2,800 daily logins. SWBNO customers reviewed approximately 35,000 bills monthly online, averaging 1,200 daily reviews. The organization sent 17,000 leak alerts via email and text to customers who opted into the notification system. SWBNO launched leak email notifications on March 12th, generating about 300 notifications per day. The organization observed that customers resolved approximately 84% of reported leaks, demonstrating program effectiveness. SWBNO maintained about 20,000 customers on autopay, representing 82% of pre-transition levels and approximately 50% of total customer accounts. The company increased communication efforts to encourage autopay enrollment and listed signup instructions on the website.

#### D. Stormwater Management and Customer Tools

SWBNO partnered with ISeeChange to launch a stormwater flood tracker through the customer portal at swbno.org. The organization developed an AI-powered tool that allowed customers to report street flooding and catch basin debris in real time. SWBNO implemented direct communication capabilities for responding to customers through the system. The organization officially launched the tracker on May 20th with a one-year partnership agreement. SWBNO coordinated press releases and promotional opportunities, presenting the tool at community meetings to demonstrate public access and online functionality. The organization directed reports from the ISeeChange app directly to service centers, with representatives routing drainage issues to the appropriate drainage response teams for tracking and resolution.

#### E. Drainage Fee Development

SWBNO experienced increased public interest and responded to increased information requests regarding drainage fee development. The organization continued to develop and finalize fee structures through Q3 2025. SWBNO analyzed and vetted several financial models, with the board planning to review recommendations on Wednesday. The organization based its combination approach on the vetting of financial models to determine the best path forward while ensuring equitable treatment of all property owners. SWBNO planned to present findings to the board, city and state officials, business groups, and community organizations to gather feedback before finalizing the structure. The organization intended to bring final recommendations to the board of directors for approval and authorization, followed by the requisite publication process through City Council and state agencies. SWBNO emphasized the

importance of public education throughout the initiative, recognizing the need for some form of drainage fee to address infrastructure requirements.