

TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

July 29, 2021

Special Meeting

9:00AM

AGENDA

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86064079955?pwd=NFM3QWNwcXlvOEJjcnpWVDVUczBDZz09>

Meeting ID: 860 6407 9955

Dial in: +1 669 900 6833

Passcode: 287097

IMPORTANT NOTICE: Due to the ongoing COVID-19 Crisis, and as authorized by the Governor's Executive Order N-29-20, Committee Members will participate in this meeting offsite via Zoom meeting. Members of the public who wish to provide comment or observe the meeting may join the Zoom meeting.

1. INTRODUCTIONS

2. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Public opportunity to speak on any matter of public interest within the Agency's jurisdiction including items on the Agency's agenda. Testimony limited to three minutes per person.

3. MEETING MINUTES

May 25, 2021

4. DOMESTIC WELL DISCUSSION FOLLOW UP

5. LAND REPURPOSING PROGRAM

6. COMMITTEE REPORTS TO GSA BOARD

7. NEXT MEETING

8. ADJOURNMENT

Alternate formats of this agenda will be made available upon request by qualified individuals with disabilities. Appropriate interpretive services for this meeting will be provided if feasible upon advance request by qualified individuals with disabilities. Please contact the Secretary at (209) 385-7654 for assistance and allow sufficient time to process and respond to your request. Copies of agendas and minutes will be available at the Merced County Community and Economic Development Department and at www.countyofmerced.com/MercedSubbasinGSA.

**MERCED SUBBASIN GROUNDWATER SUSTAINABILITY AGENCY
THE TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

MINUTES FOR MEETING OF MAY 25 2021

The special meeting of the Technical and Advisory Committee for the Merced Subbasin Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) was called to order at 1:00 p.m., on May 25, 2021, via Zoom Meeting.

I. INTRODUCTIONS

All attendees did roundtable introductions.

II. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

None

III. MEETING MINUTES

Minutes for March 23, 2021 were presented to the committee and no changes were made.

IV. DROUGHT IMPACTS ON DOMESTIC WELLS

Lacey McBride provided a presentation on current drought conditions and historical drought impacts on domestic wells in Merced County. Mrs. McBride presented the current Merced Integrated Regional Water Management Authority (MIRWMA) efforts to inventory domestic wells and commented that the lack of information available is a data gap.

Julie Berry inquired about timeline for the domestic well inventory and completion.

Mrs. McBride responded that the program has been started and the technical memo is in draft form, she will have to reference the project timeline and return with updated information.

Ms. Berry inquired about funding for mitigating domestic wells in the Prop 218 schedule

Mrs. McBride responded that the Prop 218 fee does not include funding for a mitigation project, and commented that funding this program will have to come from the next round of funding.

Greg Young commented that there was nothing stated in the GSP, amongst GSAs or by the MSGSA, that there would be a mitigation program. The discussion today is for the TAC to plan ahead for a potential drying of domestic wells.

Mrs. McBride commented that the minimum threshold for groundwater levels in this GSP was set to be protective of domestic wells and was established by the shallowest domestic well within a two-mile radius of the representative monitoring well. Mrs. McBride commented that there are data gaps in the representative monitoring wells, as well.

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Mr. Young commented that there is a possibility that there are domestic wells which are lower than the current minimum threshold and the possibility of domestic well failure because of groundwater decline. With current drought conditions, it is likely that the irrigated land will turn to groundwater pumping because of limited surface water, this may exacerbate current conditions. Mr. Young recommends that the TAC is proactive to make recommendations to the board.

Lou Myers commented that these suggestions require more consideration and that water quality should be a huge concern. Mr. Myers suggested that if a domestic well goes dry because of groundwater issues, mitigating a portion based on useful life of a well. He commented that nitrate is an active issue and this needs to be actively addressed to stop the potential spread to domestic wells.

Brad Samuelson inquired about a ballpark number of wells that will need to be replaced, given conditions like the 2015 drought.

Lacey McBride commented that almost all participants in the 2015 truck water worked with Self Help Enterprises to find solutions and commented that she would have to reach out to Self Help Enterprises for a better understanding of the number of wells replaced, deepened, or other solutions.

Mr. Samuelson commented it is difficult to address mitigation without a grasp on the financial burden and suggested creating a program that tailors to safe drinking water grants.

Mr. Young commented that knowing where problem wells are could help target other programs, like land repurposing, in areas that would have multiple benefits.

Ms. Berry commented that Clayton Water District has completed a well inventory and asked if other Districts' well inventories are available and commented that door-to-door is the most accurate way to inventory but inconvenient at this time.

Mr. Myer inquired about what other basins are doing to address this and suggested that we replicate other framework.

Mrs. McBride commented that one GSA in the Delta Mendota Basin is going through a well inventory and registration, they have a policy which requires registration of wells with the GSA and a penalty fee if the well is not registered within a specific time period. Mrs. McBride commented that Prop 68 Sustainable Groundwater Management grant funding is also being used for the well inventory in the Delta Mendota Basin.

Mr. Myers commented that he agrees with efforts to survey wells.

Mr. Young commented that there are challenges to well registration, such as language and reluctance barriers, landlord/tenant situations.

Mr. Samuelson commented that data is needed for rate payers to fund these programs.

Ms. Berry commented that the IRWM grant given is under the Disadvantaged Community grant program and inquired if the TAC should consider all wells the same, or focus on disadvantaged communities. Ms. Berry also requested clarification on whether the grant for disadvantaged communities allows a complete well inventory or only for wells in disadvantaged communities.

Mrs. McBride responded that the IRWM focus is be on the disadvantaged community's because it is a DAC grant and commented that Self Help Enterprises has programs to assist water users and DWR's SAFER Drinking Water Program also helps water systems.

Mr. Young commented that assuming that we are self-funding with a Proposition 218 fee one subset could not be identified for benefit, there would have to be equal benefit. Mr. Young commented that outside money could be beneficial to benefit a subset of people and we need data to determine what a program might look like.

Mr. Young summarized the recommendation from this TAC to the GSA Board is that more data and understanding is needed on domestic wells, before the GSA can start thinking about what a program might look like and to what degree the GSA would participate in mitigating activities. The TAC recommends the GSA pursue improved data on domestic wells.

V. COMMITTEE REPORTS TO GSA BOARD

TAC recommendation to the board is to pursue more data for a better understanding of domestic wells in this GSA and groundwater conditions.

Lou Meyers has volunteered to report this recommendation to the board.

VI. NEXT MEETING

Next meeting will be taking place in July 2021.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting was adjourned at 2:11 pm