



AGRICULTURAL WATER ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING

MINUTES

**REGULAR MEETING
MONDAY, JULY 7, 2025
1:30 PM**

(Paragraph numbers coincide with agenda item numbers)

1. CALL TO ORDER:

A regular meeting of the Santa Clara Valley Water District (Valley Water) Agricultural Water Advisory Committee (AWAC) (Committee) was called to order in the Valley Water Headquarters Building Boardroom at 5700 Almaden Expressway, San Jose, California, and by Zoom teleconference, at 1:30 p.m.

1.1 Roll Call.

Committee members in attendance were, District 1 Mitchell Mariani, District 2 James Provenzano, District 3 Robert Long Jr., District 4 Sheila Barry, Santa Clara County Farm Bureau Jan Garrod, District 5 and Vice Chairperson Trevor Garrod, and Loma Prieta Resource Conservative District and Chairperson presiding, Peter Van Dyke constituting a quorum of the Committee.

Committee members who were not in attendance in person were District 1 Erin Gil, District 4 Brent Bonino, and District 6 Tim Chiala.

Staff members in attendance were: Aaron Baker, Lisa Bankosh, Justin Burks, Olivia Cobb, Scott Elkins, Walter Gonzalez, Samantha Greene, Andy Gschwind, Jason Gurdak, Chris Hakes, Dave Leon, Candice Kwok-Smith, Katherine Maher, Nicole Merritt, Carlos Orellana, Breanne Roderick, Clarissa Sangalang, Desiree Sausele, Ashley Shannon, Kirsten Struve, Nicholas Simard, Darin Taylor, Greg Williams, Heidi Williams, Jing Wu, Grace Yu, and Beckie Zisser.

Board Representatives in attendance were: Valley Water Vice Chairperson Richard P. Santos (District 3), Director Jim Beall (District 4), and Director John L. Varela (District 1).

Public in attendance were: Valley Water Directors Shiloh Ballard (District 2) and Rebecca Eisenberg (District 7), Katja Irvin (Sierra Club), and Julie Morris (University of California, Agriculture and Natural Resources), and John Tang (San Jose Water).

2. TIME OPEN FOR PUBLIC COMMENT ON ANY ITEM NOT ON THE AGENDA:

Chairperson Peter Van Dyke declared time open for public comment on any item not on the agenda. There was no one present who wished to speak.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

3.1. Approval of April 7, 2025, Agricultural Water Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes.

Recommendation: Approve the minutes.

The Committee considered the attached minutes of the April 7, 2025, Committee meeting.

Public Comments:

None.

It was moved by James Provenzano and seconded by Vice Chairperson Trevor Garrod and unanimously carried that the minutes be approved.

4. REGULAR AGENDA:

4.1. Receive Update on The County of Santa Clara's Agricultural Outreach and Awareness Campaign - Agriculture's Impact on Water Conservation and Climate Change.

Recommendation: Receive information on the County of Santa Clara's Agricultural Outreach and Awareness Campaign Focus Area 8, which includes agriculture's role in supporting water conservation and responding to climate change.

Lisa Bankosh and Julie Morris reviewed the information on this item, per the attached Committee Agenda, and Julie Morris reviewed the information on this item, per the information contained in Attachment 2.

Julie Morris, Lisa Bankosh, and Valley Water Director Varela were available to answer questions.

The Committee discussed the following topics: noted the pause in federal grant funding; reviewed campaign estimate of \$200,000 with \$150,000 raised from various donors and application pending for a \$10,000 mini-grant from Valley Water; noted the effectiveness of campaign messaging for water conservation and agriculture along Interstate 5 and State Route 99; discussed the potential for involvement from the Association of California Water Agencies (ACWA) in the campaign; noted county

agricultural education classes designed for local community leaders to promote awareness of agriculture's role; and expressed support for outreach to the Cities of Gilroy and Morgan Hill.

Public Comments:

None.

The Committee received and noted the information, provided feedback, and took no formal action.

4.2. Receive Information and Provide Feedback on Valley Water's Draft Water Supply Master Plan (WSMP) 2050.

Recommendation: Provide feedback on the draft WSMP 2050.

Kirsten Struve reviewed the information on this item, per the attached Committee Agenda Memo, and per the information contained in Attachment 2.

Kirsten Struve, Aaron Baker, Jason Gurdak, Valley Water Vice Chairperson Santos and Valley Water Director Varela were available to answer questions.

The Committee discussed the following topics: confirmed Valley Water's share in the Sites Reservoir project is currently too small to significantly impact the overall portfolios but can be revisited as future opportunities arise; confirmed the Anderson Dam Seismic Retrofit is included in the baseline; confirmed the importance of the contract with the Semitropic Groundwater Storage Bank and noted the contract may not be renewable at the same conditions; confirmed all WSMP project options are in different stages of development and still evolving; noted the Palo Alto potable reuse project is on hold due to high costs and Valley Water is currently working on the San Jose direct potable reuse project; confirmed local water agencies are working on long-term water plans and facing issues similar to Valley Water, though dealing with different water supplies; noted importance of securing water rights and expressed concern for impact of urbanization on South County groundwater, confirmed staff monitor the groundwater in South County and nitrate concentrations are going down, noted upcoming potential programs aimed at enhancing South County groundwater, and noted staff have been reviewing the environmental documents and providing feedback on the development impacts; confirmed the operational storage capacity for the South County Zone W-5 is about 150,000 acre feet (AF); confirmed the groundwater flow between Llagas Subbasin and San Benito County is seasonal with no net loss; confirmed subsidence has not been observed in South County and groundwater levels remain stable; noted Senate Bill 423 addressing affordable housing and its impact on water demand and agricultural land use; and noted support for outreach to local elected officials regarding legislation to moderate urban growth.

Public Comments:
None.

The Committee received and noted the information, provided feedback and took no formal action.

4.3. Receive Update and Provide Feedback on West Valley and Lower Peninsula Watersheds Master Plans.

Recommendation: Receive an update on the West Valley and Lower Peninsula Watershed Master Plans and provide feedback as necessary.

Heidi Williams reviewed the information on this item, per the attached Committee Agenda Memo, and per the information contained in Attachment 2.

Heidi Williams, Lisa Bankosh, and Samantha Greene were available to answer questions.

The Committee discussed the following topics: confirmed staff shares flood model information with the local cities to assist with analyzing potential flooding vulnerabilities; expressed support for community outreach efforts to the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District, the Peninsula Open Space Trust (POST), mountain side vineyards, and homes with extensive gardens; confirmed there is no strict definition or size for rivers, creeks, or washes, the term creek is used generally by staff, and washes do not usually contain water year around; expressed support of including potential land management topics of open space grazing, brush encroachment data, vegetation impacts, and the Santa Clara County Weed Abatement Program; and noted the potential difficulty of including any rain water capture data from new homes in the area.

Public Comments:
None.

The Committee received and noted the information and took no formal action.

4.4. Receive Information on the Annual Report Regarding the Flood Control Benefit Assessments for Fiscal Year (FY) 2025-2026.

Recommendation: Receive information on the annual report regarding the Flood Control Benefit Assessments for FY 2025-2026.

Darin Taylor reviewed the information on this item, per the attached Committee Agenda Memo, and per the information contained in Attachments 1 and 2.

Darin Taylor and Valley Water Director Varela were available to answer questions.

The Committee discussed the following topics: confirmed that the benefit assessment rates are not related to the Open Space Credit; confirmed that the 2025-2026 benefit assessment rate for the South County land use category is \$0, as the debt for that zone has been paid off; and noted any South County continued flood control work will be supported by revenue sources outside of benefit assessments such as property taxes.

Public Comments:

None.

The Committee received and noted the information and took no formal action.

- 4.5. Review 2025 Agricultural Water Advisory Committee (AWAC) Work Plan, the Outcomes of Board Action of Committee Requests, and the Committee's Next Meeting Agenda.

Recommendation: Review the Committee work plan to guide the committee's discussions regarding policy alternatives and implications for Board deliberation.

The Committee considered this Item without a staff presentation.

Public Comments:

None.

Nicole Merritt and Kirsten Struve were available to answer questions.

The Committee reviewed and noted the updated Work Plan without discussion and took no formal action.

Valley Water Director Beall extended prayers for the victims of the recent flooding in Texas and expressed support for efforts ensuring vulnerable communities are not located within a designated floodplain.

5. CLERK REVIEW AND CLARIFICATION OF COMMITTEE REQUESTS:

This is an opportunity for the Clerk to review and obtain clarification on any formally moved, seconded, and approved requests and recommendations made by the Committee during the meeting.

Nicole Merritt confirmed Brent Bonino was absent from today's meeting; noted all regular agenda items were informational with no requests to speak from the public; and the Committee received, noted, and provided feedback on Items 4.1 through 4.5.

6. REPORTS:

6.1. Federal and State Affairs Report

Beckie Zisser provided the verbal update and confirmed that it may be challenging for the state to grant California Environmental Quality Act

(CEQA) exemptions for water projects and Chairperson Peter Van Dyke expressed support for a CEQA update at the next meeting.

- 6.2. Director's Report
Valley Water Director Varela acknowledged Marissa Dinapoli's memory.
- 6.3. Manager's Report
Aaron Baker confirmed no verbal report.
- 6.4. Committee Member Report
Chairperson Peter Van Dyke noted attendance along with Valley Water staff at the Pajaro River Watershed meetings; and confirmed the continued work on the Upper Llagas Creek Flood Protection Project is a part of the PL-566 Watershed Project.
- 6.5. Information Links:
Links noted on agenda.

8. ADJOURN:

- 8.1. Adjourn. The Next Regular Meeting is Scheduled at 1:30 p.m. on October 6, 2025.

Chairperson Peter Van Dyke adjourned the meeting at 3:10 p.m. The next regular meeting is scheduled to occur at 1:30 p.m. on October 6, 2025.

Date approved: October 6, 2025

Nicole Merritt
Assistant Deputy Clerk II