



AGRICULTURAL WATER ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING

MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING
MONDAY, OCTOBER 6, 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 3 Robert Long Jr., District 4 Sheila Barry and Brent Bonino, 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.

District 6 Committee member Tim Chiala arrived as noted below.

Committee members who were not in attendance in person were District 1 Erin Gil and District 2 James Provenzano.

Staff members in attendance were: Jennifer Abadilla, Chanie Abuye, Gina Adriano, Antonio Alfaro, Rachael Gibson, Vincent Gin, Joshua Golka, Walter Gonzalez, Jason Gurdak, Diahann Hudson (Solenio), Kaho Kong, Cindy Kao, Candice Kwok-Smith, Nicole Merritt, Carmen Narayanan, Stephanie Simunic, Kirsten Struve, Darin Taylor, Greg Williams, Jing Wu, and Beckie Zisser.

Board Representative in attendance was: Valley Water Vice Chairperson Richard P. Santos (District 3).

Public in attendance was: Valley Water Director Rebecca Eisenberg (District 7).

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 July 7, 2025, Agricultural Water Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes.

Recommendation: Approve the minutes.

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

Public Comments:
None.

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

4. REGULAR AGENDA:

4.1. Receive the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) Update.

Recommendation: Receive an update on the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA).

Jason Gurdak reviewed the information on this item, per the attached Committee Agenda, and per the information contained in Attachment 1.

Jason Gurdak was available to answer questions.

The Committee discussed the following topics: confirmed that the California's Department of Water Resources (DWR) processing time for reviewing Valley Water's Groundwater Management Plan was normal; noted North San Benito County is meeting DWR recommendations for outcome measures related to water quality and a lower subsidence threshold; noted the groundwater report reflects a healthy supply across all 3 basins totaling over 400,000 acre feet; noted groundwater levels are beginning to trend down due to reduced rainfall consistent with normal hydrologic patterns; confirmed Valley Water staff assisted with developing the North San Benito Groundwater Sustainability Plan; confirmed the challenges to groundwater quality are sea water intrusion and nitrate; and noted nitrate levels in groundwater are improving due to managed groundwater recharge and land-use practices use in Santa Clara County.

Public Comments:
None.

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

4.2. Receive Update on the Semitropic Groundwater Storage Bank.

Recommendation: Receive and discuss information regarding the Semitropic Groundwater Storage Bank.

Kaho Kong reviewed the information on this item, per the attached Committee Agenda Memo, and per the information contained in Attachment 1.

Kaho Kong and Cindy Kao were available to answer questions.

The Committee discussed the following topics: confirmed Kern County Subbasin is not currently on probation and groundwater banking remains operational while State Water Board staff finalize the review of plans by the Subbasin to determine if they address identified deficiencies; confirmed the probation process if implemented would not be long term but rather intended to assist the subbasin in updating its sustainability plans to address deficiencies; confirmed that some subsidence has been identified in certain areas of the Kern County subbasin but is not one of the primary issues for exiting the probation process; noted Semitropic may implement a water budget to instruct landowners on allowable groundwater use and impose fees for additional pumping which could result in land being removed from production; and confirmed the Sustainability Plan by 2040 includes discussions relating to demand reduction and groundwater recharge projects for the Kern County subbasin.

Public Comments:
None.

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

4.3. Receive Information on the Impact to the Agricultural Groundwater Production Charge Projection from the Suspension of the Pacheco Reservoir Expansion Project.

Recommendation: Receive information on the impact to the Agricultural groundwater production charge projection from the suspension of the Pacheco Reservoir Expansion Project.

Darin Taylor reviewed the information on this item, per the attached Committee Agenda Memo.

Darin Taylor and Valley Water Vice Chair Santos were available to answer questions.

The Committee discussed the following topics: noted that the suspension of the Pacheco Reservoir Expansion Project has no impact on Agricultural groundwater production charge projection; and confirmed the suspension of the Pacheco Reservoir Expansion Project means the project is not moving forward at this time.

Public Comments:
None.

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

- 4.4. 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 discussed the updated Work Plan and noted support for receiving updates related to the Semitropic Groundwater Storage Bank, groundwater levels, desalination, and onsite water recycling at new development sites.

5. INFORMATION ITEM:

- 5.1. Standing Items Report.

Recommendation: This item allows the Agricultural Water Advisory Committee to receive verbal or written updates and discuss the Board's Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Work Plan Strategies. These items are generally informational; however, the Committee may request additional information and/or provide collective input to the assigned Board Committee.

The Committee considered this item without a staff presentation.

Public Comments:
None.

Nicole Merritt was available to answer questions.

The Committee received the information, took no formal action, noted the attached Board Work Plan standing items report.

6. 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 there were no requests to speak from the public for Items 4.1 – 4.4 and Item 5.1; confirmed Committee received, discussed, and noted updates for Items 4.1 -4.4; and noted support for future updates on Semitropic Groundwater Storage Bank, groundwater levels, and desalination.

7. REPORTS:

7.1. Federal and State Affairs Report

Beckie Zisser provided the federal verbal update, confirmed potential impacts and delays related to the government shutdown, and noted an overview of the One Big Beautiful Bill Act.

Joshua Golka provided the state verbal update.

Chairperson Peter Van Dyke noted support for follow up on impacts to Special Districts related to any changes made to Division 9.

7.2. Director's Report

Valley Water Director Santos acknowledged challenges regarding government funding.

7.3. Manager's Report

Vincent Gin shared an invitation to attend the October 9, 2025, San Luis Delta-Mendota Water Authority Board 9:30 a.m. meeting. Vincent Gin and Cindy Kao provided additional details regarding staff's collaboration to address the groundwater quality in the Kern County subbasin.

7.4. Committee Member Report

Chairperson Peter Van Dyke reported attending various state-level meetings related to Division 9, county meetings concerning proposed agricultural zoning changes which may impose restrictions on farm properties and discussed some of the challenges identified during the Pajaro Watershed and Resiliency meetings.

Tim Chiala confirmed the Farm Bureau members are attending the county meetings regarding the proposed agricultural rezoning.

Chairperson Peter Van Dyke expressed support for Valley Water staff following up on additional details related to the proposed county agricultural rezoning changes.

Chairperson Peter Van Dyke expressed support for exploring potential options for wetlands restoration on Valley Water property and for groundwater percolation in flood control projects.

Tim Chiala expressed support for an update on the Upper Llagas Creek Flood Protection project and Beckie Zisser confirmed the project is not yet complete and staff are currently pursuing federal funding.

- 7.5. Information Link:
Links noted on agenda.

8. ADJOURN:

- 8.1. Adjourn. The Next Regular Meeting is Scheduled at 1:30 p.m. on January 5, 2026.

Chairperson Peter Van Dyke adjourned the meeting at 2:29 p.m. The next regular meeting is scheduled to occur at 1:30 p.m. on January 5, 2026.

Date approved: January 5, 2026

Nicole Merritt
Deputy Clerk
(Committee Meetings)