

**WESTERN MANAGEMENT AREA
CITIZEN ADVISORY GROUP
MEMORANDUM**

DATE: October 7th, 2021

FROM: WMA Citizen Advisory Group
(Memo by José Baer)

SUBJECT: Review and Discussion Draft Final WMA GSP as well as governance options

Western Management Area (WMA) Citizens Advisory Group (CAG) Members:

CAG Members in attendance: Charles Witt, Ken Domako, José Baer and Derek McLeish.

Staff and Consultants in attendance: Mr. Bill Buelow (SYRWCD), Mr. Curtis Lawlor (Stetson), Ms. Kristin Worthley (City of Lompoc), and Mr. Joe Barget (VVCSD).

Purpose

The WMA GSA Committee requested staff for the GSA agencies to coordinate meetings of the WMA CAG. Through a coordinated effort, the CAG held a meeting via teleconference due to the COVID-19 restrictions. The meeting was held on October 7th, 2021. The purpose of the meetings was for the WMA CAG (CAG) to review the Draft Final WMA GSP. The Document was prepared by Stetson Engineers. A copy of the documents was made available to the CAG prior to the meeting at www.SantaYnezWater.org.

CAG Comments on Draft Western Management Area Groundwater Sustainability Plan

Each of the four CAG members present were asked to provide their comments on the GSP. All indicated that they had no further comments and that the current version did a good job incorporating their previous comments. The CAG recognized that much of what is in the current draft has been discussed in the past, but this was the first time that the CAG discussed project and future governance.

Mr. Ken Domako briefed the CAG on preliminary discussion currently occurring between the Federal Prison and Vandenburg Space Force Base (VSFB) regarding an water supply inter-tie between the City of Lompoc and the Federal Prison. The purpose of the inter-tie was to reduce the cost of water for the Prison by switching from VSFB provided water from CCWA (State water) to City of Lompoc (City) water. The CAG discussed the project which could potentially

add 700-800 acre feet per year of additional groundwater demand on the City. There was further discussion about how the treated wastewater back to Lompoc. They do not, instead it is treated and then added to the river. That amount is roughly 31,000 gal/day. Mr. Domako said that this proposal is in the early stages of discussion and no decisions have been made to date. The City of Lompoc has not been engaged in the proposal at this point.

CAG Comments on Future Governance

There was some discussion on the structure of fees which will be necessary to fund the GSA. Joe Barget asked for clarity on the fees discussed. He pointed out that VVCSD already charges fees. It was made clear that these fees would be in addition to those already being charged by various districts.

The CAG considered the three basic options for future governance. The options are: 1) three separate GSAs implementing their own Groundwater Sustainability Plans (GSPs) and no shared costs; 2) a single GSA with merging of the three GSPs into one GSP; and 3) an umbrella Joint Powers Authority with three separate GSA committees implementing their own GSPs within their own management area and providing their own funding to do so.

Some of the CAG members said it would be helpful to know the proposed budget for the GSAs before the CAG could give a preference between the three options. There was discussion about the operational budgets of other GSAs operating in other basins including Cuyama, and Ventura. It became clear that a baseline budget of roughly \$1M was likely necessary for the operation of a single GSA. If there are three separate GSAs, then the baseline budget before considering projects might be \$3M in sum. It was generally agreed that the governance structure that utilized an umbrella GSA with three separate sub-organizations for managing projects was probably a considerably less expensive option of the three. Furthermore, there are considerable differences in the number of acre feet withdrawn from each of the three areas while the baseline bureaucratic burden would probably be similar. There are significant advantages to the Eastern and Central areas to join with the larger Western area for that reason. With roughly 50,000 acre-feet withdrawn from all three areas, a baseline budget of \$1M/yr would result in fees of \$18/acre foot, considerably lower than the \$46-100/acre foot in neighboring GSAs. It was also pointed out that the state will administer a GSA for \$80/acre foot.

Many of the projects which would be undertaken in each of the three GSA's would probably be eligible for grant funding. The projects which would be undertaken in each of the three management areas are probably different in nature as the regions and subsequently plans are quite different. Cost matching will likely be required by DWR for the grant funding.

There was not further discussion, and the meeting was adjourned.