

**MID-KAWEAH GROUNDWATER SUSTAINABILITY AGENCY
ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING**

MINUTES

July 2, 2024 – 3:00 pm

MEMBERS PRESENT: Joe Machado, Aaron Oliver, Richard Garcia, Robert Saenz, Eric Correia,

MEMBERS ABSENT: Jordan Leal, Jessi Snyder, Greg Collins, Geoffrey Vanden Heuvel

GSA MEMBER STAFF PRESENT: Aaron Fukuda, James Fisher, Diana Zegarra

PUBLIC ATTENDEES: Phil Mirwald, Lisa McEwen, Doug Jackson, Johnny Gailey

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Correia called the meeting to order at 3:05 p.m.

2. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Chair Correia called for public comments. None were forthcoming.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chair Correia called for the approval for the June 18, 2024, meeting minutes, however this agenda item was deferred to the next regularly scheduled meeting.

4. MKGSA EMERGENCY ORDINANCE (EO)

- a. **2025 Allocation Discussion** – Mr. Fisher provided the report. To set the allocation, two decisions needed to be made: the volume to allocate and the price. For volume, the MKGSA will only allocate the volume recharged (not allowing overdraft). In 2023, the MKGSA recharged and could take credit for 124,000 AF. By the end of the 2024 water year, the MKGSA anticipates an additional 45,000 AF for a cumulative total of 169,000 AF of water recharged in the past 2 years. Allocating 1 AF/acre of tiered water across the 66,500 irrigated acres in the MKGSA for 2 years results in 133,000 AF of allocated water. By subtracting the allocation from the supply, there is a remaining 36,000 AF of un-allocated recharge water that carries into 2025. In other words, if no water is recharged in 2025, this 36,000 AF of carry over water could be allocated (~0.5 AF/acre).

By the end of the 2024 water year, the average grower will have 4.21 AF/acre of groundwater credits. While this may seem high, the current water level contour map shows there is approximately 5.9 AF/acre above the measurable objective. Therefore, in the event of a drought where carry over credits are used, water levels are anticipated to still be above the measurable objective on average (though local depressions in the water table are still possible). After reviewing the data, the committee proposed to keep the allocation at 1 AF/acre for the 2025 water year.

The next decision was the price of tiered water. The price of tiered water is driven by the funding required by the mitigation program and plan. The MKGSA's mitigation reserve policy set the target minimum reserves for domestic well mitigation at \$1.55M (anticipated

average annual expenses for the program) and a maximum of \$3.00M. If the tiered water rate remained at \$10/AF – and after the 5 known domestic wells requiring mitigation are replaced - the GSA would still have \$2.3M in reserves. Increasing the tiered water rate to \$15 and \$20 would result in reserves of \$2.65 and \$3.00M respectively. The committee decided that leaving the rate at \$10 as \$2.3M still provides a significant buffer above the minimum target.

By a motion of Committee Member Machado and seconded by Committee Member Saenz, the committee approved the recommendation for Board consideration that the 2025 allocation remain identical to 2024: 1 AF/acre at \$10/AF.

5. SWRCB PROBATIONARY HEARING – UPDATE

The SWRCB moved the Kaweah Subbasin’s probationary hearing date from November 5th, 2024 to January 7th, 2025, affording the Kaweah Subbasin an additional two months to prepare. This extension will not precipitously change the technical team’s schedule for addressing the two additional deficiencies identified by the SWRCB: water quality and interconnected surface water. Therefore, the technical team will keep the aggressive timeline to submit a final GSP by fall 2024.

6. COMMITTEE MEMBER REPORTS, UPDATES, OR OTHER ITEMS OF INTEREST

Chair Correia motioned for any updates or reports. None were forthcoming.

7. ADJOURN

Chair Correia adjourned the meeting at 5:00 p.m.

Attest: _____
GSA Board Secretary

Advisory Committee Chair