

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

MINUTES

October 3, 2023 – 3:00 pm

MEMBERS PRESENT: Eric Correia, Geoffrey Vanden Heuvel, Lee Johnson, Robert Saenz, Aaron Oliver, Jordan Leal, Richard Garcia, Joe Machado

MEMBERS ABSENT: Greg Collins, Jessi Snyder

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

PUBLIC ATTENDEES: Georgina King, Andrew Hart, Johnny Gailey, Mark Larsen

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order by Chair Correia at 3:00 p.m.

2. **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Chair Correia called for public comments. None were forthcoming.

3. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- a. Chair Correia called for a motion to approve the meeting minutes for both August 22nd and September 19th, 2023. Committee Member Vanden Heuvel motioned for approval, Committee Member Leal seconded the motion, and the motion was carried.

4. **MKGSA GSP**

a. **GSP Review – Sustainable Management Criteria**

Ms. King presented the report. The Kaweah Subbasin Technical Team already developed the 2014 groundwater level surface and then worked with the Advisory Committee to identify protective threshold options (30 ft from the bottom of the well). Ms. King presented protective thresholds for different groundwater level conditions, affectionately named “low impact”, “medium impact”, and “high impact”. The “Low impact” scenario had the most restrictive groundwater minimum thresholds but had the lowest mitigation costs. Conversely, “high impact” allowed for the most overdraft but could cost as much as \$5M in additional domestic well mitigation costs. Subsidence was also reviewed, but more work is necessary to project future subsidence for the desired minimum thresholds.

b. **Emergency Ordinance Policy**

1. *Precipitation Calculation Policy* – Mr. Fisher presented the report. In response to growing interest and adoption in other GSAs, Mr. Fisher presented a change in the precipitation calculation. Currently, the MKGSA credits growers with precipitation using 80% of measured precipitation from a dense network of precipitation gauges both publicly funded and from LandIQ. However, this calculation method has two significant drawbacks. First, it is more difficult to plan water budgets when both surface water and precipitation amounts are unknown (only the groundwater allocation is known). Second, precipitation

credits tend to be highest when surface water is available (when credits are not needed) and lowest when surface water is unavailable (when credits are most needed). A 25-year rolling average will help smooth the ride of the otherwise volatile water budgets. By motion of Chair Correia, and seconded by Committee Member Saenz, the motion was carried.

c. **2024 Groundwater Allocation**

Mr. Fukuda presented the report. Fukuda first explained that the allocation was generous for the first two years as growers adjusted to a new limited groundwater pumping extractions for the first time. The relatively high allocations were always meant to be temporary. However, with the water market anticipated to be up and running in early 2024, the MKGSA has the tools to reduce the allocation while still affording ample operational flexibility. Fukuda proposed 3 changes to the groundwater allocation. (1) Reduce the tiered water for purchase from 10” to 6” for each tier. (2) Reduce the mitigation tiered water from 1.0 AF/acre to 0.5 AF/acre and (3) Increase the ET cap (the maximum amount of ET from groundwater pumping, excluding precipitation and surface water) from 2.5 AF/acre to 3.0 AF/acre. Chair Correia made a motion for a roll call vote and Committee Member Leal seconded the motion. By a vote of 7-1, the allocation was agreed upon to recommend to the Board of Directors for consideration. .

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

6. ADJOURN

Chair Correia adjourned the meeting at 5:11 p.m. The next meeting is scheduled for December 5, 2023.

Attest: _____
GSA Board Secretary

Advisory Committee Chair