



# Stanislaus County Water Advisory Committee

## Minutes

May 28<sup>th</sup>, 2025, 9:00 a.m.

Stanislaus County Farm Bureau

### Members Present:

Rachelle Antinetti  
Daniel Bays  
Louis Brichetto  
Larry Byrd  
Caitie Diemel

Christy McKinnon  
Jim Mortensen  
Tom Orvis  
Tim Sanders  
Edward Tobias

Navjot Athwal  
Katie Staack  
Trent Voss  
Vince Dkyzeul  
Rod Vilas

### Members Absent:

Terry Withrow  
Cooper Rossiter

Joseph Day

Sean Roddy

- I. Call to Order at 9:01 am (The entire meeting can be viewed [Water Advisory Committee - Groundwater Resources - Environmental Resources - Stanislaus County](#) and by selecting the video option for March 26<sup>th</sup>, 2025, Water Advisory Committee Meeting)
- II. Pledge of Allegiance
- III. Public Comment
- IV. Roll Call

**V. Action Items (subject to formal vote):**

A quorum of voting members was present

- I. Approval of March 26th, 2025 Meeting Minutes  
Motion: Tim Sanders  
Second: Jim Mortensen

**VI. Informational Items (not subject to a formal vote):****I. Stantec – SB552 County Drought Resilience Plan Risk Assessment –**

Sarah Hamilton of Stantec gave a presentation on Stanislaus County's Drought Resilience Plan, which is currently being developed in response to Senate Bill 552. The plan is meant to help protect residents who rely on small water systems and domestic wells during droughts or water shortages. The presentation covered the first three chapters of the plan, including background on the legislation, the role of the County's Drought Task Force, and a draft risk assessment that looks at which areas of the county are most at risk. The task force will help review conditions, share information with local agencies, and help plan responses. Hamilton also shared maps and figures that highlight where domestic wells and small water systems are located, and which are most vulnerable.

The risk assessment used data from DWR to score physical and social vulnerabilities across the county. Physical risks included fractured rock areas, groundwater quality, and heavy agricultural use. Social risks were based on census data and analyzed income, age, housing, and language barriers. These scores help identify which areas may be more likely to struggle the most during a drought. This information will guide the next phase of the plan, which is developing short-term actions like emergency water supplies or well repairs, and long-term strategies such as consolidating water systems or improving infrastructure. Draft chapters are open for feedback, and the next task force meeting in July will focus on reviewing proposed actions. The full draft plan is expected by the end 2025, with a final version by early 2026.

**Additional Drought Task Force Meetings scheduled for:**

July 30, 2025: 9 a.m., Farm Bureau

January 28, 2026: 9 a.m., Farm Bureau

March 25, 2026: 9 a.m., Farm Bureau

II. **Louis Brichetto – Modesto Subbasin Operational Budgets by Management Area – [Attachment 2](#)**

Louis Brichetto, a grower in the Oakdale Management Area and Non-District East, discussed groundwater pumping trends in the Modesto Subbasin over the past 15 years. He requested and reviewed water use data focusing on agricultural and urban pumping across different management areas. He found data that reflected that the Modesto Management Area accounts for 57% of total pumping despite covering only about 42% of the land. Brichetto found this groundwater overuse concerning, especially since surface water infrastructure like the Modesto water treatment plant is underutilized. Brichetto also noted that irrigation districts don't fully prevent groundwater pumping, with significant use occurring even within district boundaries.

Eric Thorburn, Water Resources Manager at Oakdale Irrigation District responded to Brichetto's presentation and noted that the pumping data shown provides an incomplete picture, as it excludes surface water recharge and reuse, which are significant in some areas. He emphasized that pumping estimates come from models with uncertainties and that groundwater level trends provide better insight into basin health. Thorburn cautioned that management actions should be careful and gradual, considering all factors.

III. **Christy McKinnon - Modesto Subbasin STRGBA Groundwater Sustainability Agency Workshop #2: Domestic Well Mitigation Program, Well Impact Analysis and Self-Help Enterprises GSA Support Services.**

Christy McKinnon provided a brief update encouraging attendance at the then-upcoming Modesto Subbasin workshop on May 28th, at 1:30 pm at the Modesto Irrigation District. The workshop featured consultants presenting data on the domestic well mitigation program, including well impact analyses. Additionally, Self-Help Enterprises discussed their program to support the GSA's in implementing the mitigation efforts.

IV. **Christy McKinnon – SGMA Updates**

Christy McKinnon provided updates on the annual groundwater reports submitted to the Department of Water Resources on April 1st, which are now available online. These reports confirm that the Modesto Subbasin continues to operate under sustainable conditions based on criteria established in the GSP. Only one well reported groundwater levels below the minimum

threshold, and no undesirable results were observed, as 25% of wells remained above thresholds for two consecutive years.

In the Turlock Subbasin, groundwater levels generally increased in the western upper principal aquifer and showed slight recovery in parts of the eastern aquifer, though declines continued elsewhere. While 21 of 33 wells measured fell below minimum thresholds, the subbasin recorded undesirable results for interconnected surface waters. The GSAs acknowledge that temporary declines below minimum thresholds may occur during project implementation and have established interim milestones for monitoring and recovery.

McKinnon also noted the recent approval of the East Turlock Proposition 218 groundwater extraction fee, which passed with minimal protest and is vital to fund ongoing GSA services. These fees support projects such as expanded surface water deliveries, land repurposing incentives, and domestic well mitigation programs. McKinnon emphasized that local management with these programs offers farmers more reliable and cost-effective options compared to potential state intervention, which could result in more stringent water use restrictions.

<https://turlockgroundwater.org/prop-218-groundwater-use-fee>

#### V. **Roundtable Discussion**

During the short roundtable discussion, Rachelle Antinetti requested that calendar invitations be distributed for upcoming meetings to assist with scheduling. Additionally, she proposed including a segment on the agenda for guest introduction to ensure all attendees are identified.

#### VI. **Scheduling of Next Meeting –**

Wednesday, July 30, 2025, at 9:00 a.m.

Meeting location: Stanislaus Farm Bureau,  
1201 L St. Modesto, CA.

\*Underlined items are Action Items subject to vote as described in the committee by-laws