



AGRICULTURAL WATER ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING

MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING SESSION
MONDAY, APRIL 7, 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 Erin Gil, District 2 James Provenzano, and Brent Bonino, District 5 Jan Garrod, District 6 Robert Long, 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 4 Brent Bonino and Sheila Barry arrived as noted below.

Committee members not in attendance in person were District 1 Mitchell Mariani and District 6 Tim Chiala.

Staff members in attendance were: Jennifer Abadilla, Chanie Abuye, Jason Araujo, Aaron Baker, Justin Burks, Vanessa De La Piedra, Vincent Gin, Joshua Golka, Andy Gschwind, Jason Gurdak, Marino Hernandez, Joel Jenkins, Cindy Kao, Bassam Kassab, Candice Kwok-Smith, Feliser Lee, Robert Long Jr., Ryan McCarter, Patrice McElroy, Nicole Merritt, Carmen Narayanan, Mario Rivas, Desiree Sausele, Ashley Shannon, Kirsten Struve, Nicholas Simard, Darin Taylor, and Gennifer Wehrmeyer.

Board Representatives in attendance were: Valley Water Vice Chairperson Richard P. Santos (District 3), Director Jim Beall (District 4), and Director John L. Varela (District 1).

Public in attendance were: Valley Water Director Rebecca Eisenberg (District 7), Mike Avina (Soluri Reserve, A Law Corp.), Eileen Besmer Shydowski (University of California, Agriculture and Natural Resources), and Katja Irvin (Sierra Club).

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.

Handout 2.1-A noted to be addressed by Valley Water Vice Chairperson Santos under Item 6.2 without official action.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

- 3.1. Approval of January 6, 2025, Agricultural Water Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes.

Recommendation: Approve the minutes.

The Committee considered the attached minutes of the January 6, 2025, Committee meeting.

Public Comments:
None.

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

4. REGULAR AGENDA:

Chairperson Peter Van Dyke confirmed that Item 4.1. would be considered after Item 4.2.

Chairperson Peter Van Dyke moved the agenda to Item 4.2.

- 4.2. Receive Information and Provide Feedback on Valley Water's Water Supply Master Plan (WSMP) 2050.

Recommendation: Provide feedback on the development of WSMP 2050.

Brent Bonino arrived.

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

Sheila Barry arrived.

Kirsten Struve, and Vincent Gin were available to answer questions.

The Committee discussed the following topics: confirmed Plan Bay Area 2040's methodology is being used by Valley Water for water demand projections out to 2050 with the demand based on housing types; Plan Bay Area 2050 maximizes growth and was not used for the projections; noted WSMP 2050 has two bookends, one that keeps demand flat and one increasing with housing growth and climate change; noted Pacheco Reservoir Expansion project is looking for partners; confirmed Valley Water could utilize their share of water for the county directly or place in the Semitropic Water Storage District or other groundwater storage as needed from the Delta Conveyance Project investment per future Board approval for the construction phase; noted support for continued community outreach to increase awareness on the limitations of water conservation, availability of future water and water storage, and climate change, and noted Valley Water's investment in water conservation and the need to invest in water infrastructure.

Public Comments:
None.

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

Chairperson Peter Van Dyke returned the agenda to Item 4.1.

4.1. Review Proposed Fiscal Year (FY) 2025-2026 Groundwater Production Charges and Receive Committee Feedback.

Recommendation: Review proposed FY 2025-26 Groundwater Production Charges and receive Committee feedback.

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

Carmen Narayanan, Aaron Baker, and Darin Taylor were available to answer questions.

The Committee discussed the following topics: confirmed the Open Space Credit assists with keeping the agricultural rates lower through Valley Water's portion of the ad valorem property tax and noted the property taxes needed to cover the full cost of this service are reflected on Page 15 of Attachment 1; confirmed proposed 2025-2026 agricultural rate will be the same at \$43 per acre foot for all of the noted groundwater zones including North County; and noted support of the importance of ecosystem benefits, air quality, the open space credit, carbon sequestration and food production for the quality of life.

Public Comments:
None.

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

4.3. Receive an Update on Valley Water's South County Managed Aquifer Recharge Activities.

Recommendation: Receive an update on Valley Water's South County managed aquifer recharge activities.

Jason Gurdak reviewed the information on this item, per the attached Committee Agenda Memo, and per the information contained in Attachment 4.

Jason Gurdak, Kirsten Struve, Vincent Gin, Aaron Baker, and Valley Water Director Varela were available to answer questions.

The Committee discussed the following topics: confirmed the general availability for natural/local recharge and the imported or managed reservoir recharge countywide in 2024 was estimated as 40% imported and 60% local, North County was 45% imported and 55% local, and South County was 33% imported and 67% local; confirmed natural recharge is from local sources and managed recharge includes local reservoirs and imported water; noted generally a wetland is where water is discharging or coming to the land surface and the managed recharge is best where the water table is deep for groundwater storage; confirmed Valley Water staff review some environmental documents for development regarding water supply assessments and any effects on natural recharge and noted some housing development guidelines are state mandated; confirmed Valley Water staff manage aquifer recharge by conjunctive water management which allows for more water to be put back into the ground/reservoirs during the wet years to prepare for additional pumping in the dry years to keep groundwater storage consistent; noted support for Valley Water to seek a portion of the state development impact fees for groundwater recharge; confirmed Valley Water is required to follow state guidelines regarding Flood-Managed Aquifer Recharge (Flood-MAR) with large spaces for flooding and water rights as potential hurdles; noted Valley Water is working on a Flood-MAR pilot program; confirmed South County's Zone W-5 operational storage capacity is 150,000 acre feet; confirmed Church Avenue percolation ponds receive local water, require periodic repairs and a diversion structure and a fish screen are currently undergoing improvement; noted southern Coyote Valley may be promising for a new off-stream recharge pond(s) because the groundwater flows north.

Public Comments:
None.

The Committee received and noted the information 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 and approve 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 was available to answer questions.

The Committee reviewed and noted the Work Plan and the upcoming July 7, 2025, 1:30 p.m. regular meeting without discussion and took no formal action.

5. **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 the Committee reviewed and noted the proposed FY 2025-2026 Groundwater Production Charges and provided feedback of the importance of ecosystem benefits, air quality, the open space credit, carbon sequestration, and food production for the quality of life under Item 4.1; received, noted, and provided feedback on the WSMP 2050 and the importance of water conservation and the reclamation of water under Item 4.2; received, discussed, and noted the update on Valley Water's South County Managed Aquifer Recharge Activities under Item 4.3; and reviewed and noted the Work Plan under Item 4.4.

6. **REPORTS:**

6.1. Federal and State Affairs Report

Joshua Golka provided a verbal update and confirmed the state's insurance industry issues are a discussion topic with a focus on affordability for legislative representatives.

6.2. Director's Report

Valley Water Director Varela noted support for looking at the impacts on water rates, projects, and cost of doing business per the upcoming Valley Water Board budget review and the recent government funding changes and reductions, interest in including South County garlic and mushroom producers at AWAC meetings, and for AWAC Members to attend the San Luis Delta Mendota Water Authority and Association of California Water Agencies (ACWA) Board meetings.

Valley Water Vice Chairperson Santos noted the importance of taking action and support for the AWAC members for their continued farming

contributions and to engage with legislative representatives.

Valley Water Board Vice Chairperson Santos acknowledged AWAC Member Robert Long's contributions and the receipt of the letter from Valerie Long identified as Handout 2.1- A and read it into the record.

Copies of the Handout were distributed to the Committee and made available to the public.

6.3. Manager's Report

Aaron Baker expressed support for the feedback from the AWAC members and for filling AWAC's vacancies.

Vincent Gin provided a verbal update on the increased imported water allocation by the state and federal government.

6.4. Committee Member Report

Jan Garrod expressed support for the Valley Water Board to keep in mind the stationary crop earnings despite increasing expenses throughout the years.

Sheila Barry noted a workshop on April 17, 2025, at Martial Cottle Park in San Jose with Valley Water regarding the benefits and drawbacks of ground squirrels.

Chairperson Peter Van Dyke noted a vacancy on the Loma Prieta Resource Conservation Board, confirmed working with Vincent Gin and Darin Taylor regarding the review of the Advisory Committee Resolution 17-75 to increase AWAC membership, noted Robert Long Jr.'s AWAC application and confirmed the status of the Sierra Nevada snowpack being at the 96%-98% average mark.

6.5. Information Links:

Links noted on agenda.

8. ADJOURN:

8.1. Adjourn in Memory of Robert Long. The Next Regular Meeting is Scheduled at 1:30 p.m. on July 7, 2025.

Chairperson Peter Van Dyke adjourned the meeting in memory of AWAC Member Robert Long at 3:11 p.m. The next regular meeting is scheduled to occur at 1:30 p.m. on July 7, 2025.

Date approved: July 7, 2025

Nicole Merritt
Assistant Deputy Clerk II