



County of Monterey

Item No.

Board Report

Board of Supervisors
Chambers
168 W. Alisal St., 1st Floor
Salinas, CA 93901

Legistar File Number: WRAG 25-057

April 21, 2025

Introduced: 4/14/2025

Current Status: Agenda Ready

Version: 1

Matter Type: WR General Agenda

Consider recommending that the Board of Supervisors of the Monterey County Water Resources Agency:

- a. Approve and authorize the General Manager of the Water Resources Agency to accept donation of monitoring wells 180/400-GDE-1 valued at \$52,797; E-DA-2 valued at \$282,739; L-GWL-2 valued at \$109,355; L-GWL-6 valued at \$109,355; UV-GWL-1 valued at \$81,540; and UV-ISW-1 valued at \$63,923 from the Salinas Valley Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency;
- b. Authorize the General Manager of the Water Resources Agency to enter into Agreements to Convey Ownership in Monitoring Wells 180/400-GDE-1, E-DA-2, L-GWL-2, L-GWL-6, UV-GWL-1, and UV-ISW-1; and
- c. Authorize the Water Resources Agency to use monitoring wells 180/400-GDE-1, E-DA-2, L-GWL-2, L-GWL-6, UV-GWL-1, and UV-ISW-1 for implementation of its Groundwater Monitoring Program.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Board of Directors of the Monterey County Water Resources Agency recommend that the Board of Supervisors of the Monterey County Water Resources Agency:

- a. Approve and authorize the General Manager of the Water Resources Agency to accept donation of monitoring wells 180/400-GDE-1 valued at \$52,797; E-DA-2 valued at \$282,739; L-GWL-2 valued at \$109,355; L-GWL-6 valued at \$109,355; UV-GWL-1 valued at \$81,540; and UV-ISW-1 valued at \$63,923 from the Salinas Valley Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency;
- b. Authorize the General Manager of the Water Resources Agency to enter into Agreements to Convey Ownership in Monitoring Wells 180/400-GDE-1, E-DA-2, L-GWL-2, L-GWL-6, UV-GWL-1, and UV-ISW-1; and
- c. Authorize the Water Resources Agency to use monitoring wells 180/400-GDE-1, E-DA-2, L-GWL-2, L-GWL-6, UV-GWL-1, and UV-ISW-1 for implementation of its Groundwater Monitoring Program.

SUMMARY/DISCUSSION:

In 2024, the Salinas Valley Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency ("SVBGSA") constructed ten dedicated monitoring wells throughout the Salinas Valley Groundwater Basin in furtherance of their regulatory activities pursuant to the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act ("SGMA") and to fill data gaps and expand the extent of the Monterey County Water Resources Agency's ("MCWRA") groundwater monitoring network.

Construction of the monitoring wells was funded through Sustainable Groundwater Management Round 2 Implementation Grants #4600015881 (SVBGSA). SVBGSA intends to convey ownership of six monitoring wells, referred to as “180/400-GDE-1,” “E-DA-2,” “L-GWL-2,” “L-GWL-6,” “UV-GWL-1,” and “UV-ISW-1” to MCWRA. Two of the wells were constructed to monitor shallow groundwater conditions related to either groundwater dependent ecosystems (180/400-GDE-1) or the connection between groundwater and surface water (UV-ISW-1). One well (E-DA-2) was constructed to monitor the Deep Aquifers. Three wells were constructed in areas of the Langley and Upper Valley subbasins to fill data gaps in the groundwater level monitoring network: L-GWL-2 and L-GWL-6 in the Langley Subbasin and UV-GWL-1 in the Upper Valley Subbasin (Attachment 1). The SVBGSA has furnished MCWRA with Well Completion Reports for all six of the subject monitoring wells (Attachment 2).

Staff is recommending MCWRA accept ownership of 180/400-GDE-1, E-DA-2, L-GWL-2, L-GWL-6, UV-GWL-1, and UV-ISW-1 pursuant to the conditions set forth in the Agreement to Convey Ownership for each well (“Agreements”), which include maintenance and reporting responsibilities related to the wells (Attachment 3).

The MCWRA Board of Supervisors is empowered to accept this gift in order to serve a public purpose which, in this instance, is monitoring of groundwater conditions within the Salinas Valley Groundwater Basin to inform water resources management. If the MCWRA Board of Supervisors authorizes acceptance of the donated monitoring wells, MCWRA has an opportunity to enhance its understanding of groundwater level and groundwater quality conditions in the Salinas Valley Groundwater Basin and provide data that the MCWDGSA and SVBGSA require to meet regulatory mandates under SGMA.

The Fair Political Practices Commission (FPPC) requires, by regulation, that local officials accepting gifts for local agency purposes document the transaction and post information about the transaction on the agency website if the fair market value is worth more than \$2,500. Based on information provided by the SVBGSA, fair market value of each monitoring well is as follows: 180/400-GDE-1 is \$52,797; E-DA-2 is \$282,739; L-GWL-2 is \$109,335; L-GWL-6 is \$109,335; UV-GWL-1 is \$81,540; and, UV-ISW-1 is \$63,923.

This recommendation is consistent with an action approved by the Board of Supervisors on September 10, 2024, wherein the donation of three dedicated monitoring wells from the SVBGSA was accepted following recommendations from the Agency’s staff, Finance Committee, and Board of Directors.

On April 4, 2025, the Agency’s Finance Committee recommended this proposal move forward to the Board of Directors for consideration. During Committee deliberation, concern was raised about the potential for future maintenance costs of these monitoring wells and it questioned whether the SVBGSA should maintain financial responsibility. Staff explained that throughout the 2023-2024 discussions among the agencies and stakeholders about the future of the groundwater monitoring activities in the Salinas Valley Basin, there was a strong preference towards creating and maintaining clear roles and responsibilities between the Agency and SVBGSA, and to minimize the duplication of

efforts and cost. This was a significant reason for expanding and consolidating the Agency's groundwater monitoring activities into a single Groundwater Monitoring Program, which culminated in the passage of Ordinance 5426. If the SVBGSA were to maintain partial responsibility for these monitoring wells, the Agency's currently clear role over groundwater monitoring would diffuse, the administrative burden at each agency would increase, as would costs to the stakeholders, as they are shared among the two agencies. Accepting the wells, and the future costs of maintaining them, preserves past policy direction and operational efficiency.

Additionally, the recommended action is consistent with the Board of Directors approved Goals and Strategies from the MCWRA Strategic Plan: Goal B, Strategy 2 - *Collaborate with local Groundwater Sustainability Agencies, define MCWRA's role, and implement a GSA integration plan*; Goal B, Strategy 7 - *Use data and analysis to make informed decisions based on science*; and Goal C, Strategy 6 - *Pursue grant funding and cost saving opportunities from all available sources, including collaborating with the GSA*.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

County Counsel and the Salinas Valley Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency assisted with development and review of the Agreements.

FINANCING:

The Agency currently owns and maintains over 50 dedicated monitoring wells. From our experience, it is estimated that maintenance of these monitoring wells may be required every 10 years, at a cost of \$5,000 to \$8,000 per well. More substantial repairs could be required periodically, with costs varying depending on the extent of the necessary repairs. Funding for maintenance of the donated monitoring wells would be included in the proposed Groundwater Monitoring Program regulatory fee (Fund 111).

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Approved by: Ara Azhderian, General Manager, (831)755-4860

Attachment:

1. Well Location Maps
2. Well Completion Reports
3. Agreements to Convey Ownership
4. Board Order