



# County of Monterey

Item No.

## Board Report

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

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April 28, 2026

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Monterey County Water Resources Agency & Salinas Valley Basing Groundwater Sustainability Agency Selection of New Water Project for Further Consideration

### RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Monterey County Water Resources Agency Board of Supervisors (Board):

Receive information on Salinas Valley Groundwater Sustainability: Overview of Feasibility Studies and Implementation Strategy and provide input on approach to addressing groundwater sustainability challenges in the Salinas Valley

### **BACKGROUND:**

The Salinas Valley Groundwater Basin consists of six subbasins under the jurisdiction of the Salinas Valley Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency (SVBGSA). Currently, four of these subbasins are not meeting sustainability criteria due to two primary concerns: seawater intrusion and chronic lowering of groundwater levels.

Under the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA), the region must achieve sustainability by 2040/2042 and submit Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) Periodic Evaluations to the Department of Water Resources by January 2027.

This spring, in collaboration with the Monterey County Water Resources Agency (MCWRA), the SVBGSA completed a series of feasibility studies and technical investigations evaluating potential projects and management actions intended to achieve the Sustainability Management Criteria established in the GSPs and is now considering the recent findings to inform decision-making about future planning efforts.

### **DISCUSSION:**

The SVBGSA, has developed an Integrated Implementation Strategy (IIS) to evaluate combinations of projects and management actions across the basin. The IIS process translates technical work into policy-level options for consideration by the SVBGSA Board of Directors.

Six major feasibility studies have been completed:

1. Aquifer Storage and Recovery (ASR) - Store excess surface water during wet periods in aquifer for recovery during dry periods
2. Brackish Groundwater Restoration (BGR) - Extract and treat brackish/saline groundwater from intruded coastal aquifers to create new water supply and slow seawater intrusion
3. Castroville & Eastside Canals and Alternatives (C&E) - Expand surface water diversion and distribution capacity to reduce groundwater pumping
4. New Seawater Intrusion Project (NSIP) - Develop a new distribution system to deliver alternative irrigation supplies in-lieu of groundwater extractions to protect inland aquifers
5. Castroville Seawater Intrusion Project (CSIP) Optimization - Enhance performance of existing irrigation supply infrastructure to reduce groundwater pumping
6. Demand Management - Reduce overall groundwater extraction through efficiency improvements, conservation incentives, and water use practice improvements

Today's presentation provides an overview of these feasibility studies, including project objectives, key findings, and implementation challenges.

**Timeline:**

- April 28, 2026: Board of Supervisors overview presentation (today)
- May 18, 2026: Joint workshop with MCWRA Board of Supervisors and Board of Directors, and SVBGSA Board of Directors
- Summer 2026: PMA Portfolio development and analysis
- Fall 2026: SVBGSA Board selects preferred implementation portfolio
- January 2027: Submit GSP Periodic Evaluations to DWR
- 2027-2040: Phased project planning, implementation, and adaptive management

**Roles and responsibilities:**

SVBGSA leads the IIS coordination and decision process, facilitates public engagement, and will select the preferred portfolio of projects and management actions.

MCWRA provides technical and project development support and coordinates regional infrastructure planning.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

No direct fiscal impact at this time. Future implementation of selected projects will require significant capital investment and operational funding. Cost estimates and funding strategies will be developed as part of the IIS process.

**CEQA DETERMINATION:**

Not applicable.

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