

Attachment A

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Board of Supervisors
County of Monterey, State of California

Resolution No. 24-_____

Resolution of the Monterey County Board
of Supervisors:

- a. Finding that receiving the)
Salinas Valley Groundwater)
Basin Investigation report)
("Investigation Report") is not a)
project under CEQA Guidelines)
section 15378(b)(5);)
- b. Acknowledging receipt of the)
Investigation Report prepared)
pursuant to Policy PS-3.1 of the)
2010 Monterey County General)
Plan;)
- c. Directing staff to coordinate with)
applicable groundwater)
sustainability agencies to align)
groundwater sustainability)
efforts with land use decisions as)
a measure that will address the)
groundwater conditions)
described in the Investigation)
Report; and)
- d. Directing staff to prepare a)
General Plan amendment to)
update Policy PS-3.1.in light of)
the completed investigation.)

WHEREAS, in October of 2010, the County of Monterey ("County") adopted a comprehensive update to its General Plan known as the 2010 Monterey County General Plan ("General Plan").

WHEREAS, numerous plaintiffs filed lawsuits concerning the Board's action, including the Salinas Valley Water Coalition, LandWatch Monterey County, and the Open Monterey Project.

WHEREAS, in 2013 the Board of Supervisors adopted amendments to the 2010 General Plan in response to litigation over the General Plan, including amending Policy PS-3.1.

WHEREAS, as amended, Policy PS-3.1 prohibits development without proof, based on specific findings and supported by evidence, that there is a long-term, sustainable water supply, both in quality and quantity to serve development. This requirement does not apply to development within Monterey County Water Resources Agency's

(“MCWRA”) Zone 2C assessment district of the Salinas Valley Groundwater Basin (among other listed items) provided the County prepared a study for the Board of Supervisors regarding Zone 2C.

WHEREAS, since Policy PS-3.1 was adopted and amended, groundwater regulations have changed dramatically with the enactment of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (“SGMA”) by the California legislature in 2014.

WHEREAS, Zone 2C covers of portions of the Salinas Valley Groundwater Basin (“Basin”), but does not cover the full extent of the Basin that is now subject to SGMA.

WHEREAS, despite changes in groundwater regulations, the County caused the Salinas Valley Groundwater Basin Investigation Report (“Investigation Report”) to be prepared in coordination with MCWRA and consultant Montgomery & Associates.

WHEREAS, as part of the Investigation Report, the County entered into a cooperative agreement with the United States Geological Survey (“USGS”) to configure and calibrate an integrated comprehensive hydrological model to assess the health of the Basin. The timelines for development of the Salinas Valley Integrated Hydrologic Model (“SVIHM”), Salinas Valley Operational Model (“SVOM”), and the Salinas Valley Seawater Intrusion Model (“SWI Model”) were extended longer than originally anticipated due to United States Geological Survey (“USGS”) delays, the complex nature of the model domain, the extensive geographic area of the model, and the need to develop new approaches for simulating reservoir operations and capturing land use practices within the Salinas Valley. The provision of the Investigation Report to the Board of Supervisors was also extended longer than anticipated due to changes in key staff positions within the County.

WHEREAS, the Investigation Report found that net water demands have increased; groundwater levels are anticipated to decline; and seawater intrusion will likely continue under average climate conditions through 2030.

WHEREAS, Policy PS-3.1 states that “if the study reaches the conclusions for Zone 2C identified in subsection 6) i or 6) ii and 6) iii, the Board of Supervisors shall adopt one or more measures identified in the study, or other appropriate measures, to address the identified conditions.”

WHEREAS, the Investigation Report recommends consideration of the following measures to address the conditions identified therein:

1. Maintain current infrastructure, included regulatory required work at San Antonio and Nacimiento Reservoirs.
2. Consider groundwater conditions in Land Use Planning.
3. Prevent declines in groundwater recharge.
4. Support conservation to reduce groundwater demand.
5. Prevent seawater intrusion leakage between aquifers.
6. Reservoir operations: Balance reservoir needs with groundwater recharge
7. Reduce groundwater extraction through collaboration and data collection with a variety of interested parties.

8. Provide alternative supplies: surface water diversions.
9. Increase groundwater recharge.
10. Reduce groundwater extraction near seawater intrusion boundary.
11. Install seawater extraction barrier.

WHEREAS, local groundwater sustainability agencies (“GSAs”) formed pursuant to SGMA have developed groundwater sustainability plans (“GSPs”) for groundwater basins in Monterey County. Salinas Valley Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency (“SVBGSA”), Arroyo Seco GSA, Marina Coast Water District GSA, and County of Monterey GSA are responsible for the groundwater basins within Zone 2C as well as some areas that are not within Zone 2C. These GSAs adopted GSPs for six subbasins within their areas, which have been approved by the California Department of Water Resources. The GSPs are evaluated every five years and outline how groundwater sustainability will be achieved within 20 years and then maintained for an additional 30 years in medium and high priority groundwater basins. The GSPs identify projects and management actions aimed at achieving the sustainability goals. These projects and actions include measures to improve groundwater recharge (Recommendation 3 and 9 of the Investigation Report), water conservation (Recommendation 4 of the Investigation Report), stop seawater intrusion (Recommendations 5, 10, and 11 of the Investigation Report) and increase water supplies (Recommendation 8 of the Investigation Report).

WHEREAS, MCWRA oversees Nacimiento and San Antonio Reservoir operations and maintains current infrastructure and balances the reservoirs’ needs with groundwater recharge by releasing water from the reservoirs in planned and studied increments (Recommendations 1 and 6 of the Investigation Report). MCWRA and SVBGSA collaborate to monitor groundwater extractions and collect data on groundwater extraction and groundwater levels annually (Recommendation 7 of the Investigation Report).

WHEREAS, the County’s Housing Community Development (“HCD”) processes development applications for the unincorporated area. Development is subject to adopted policies of the General Plan in the inland unincorporated areas of the County including Policy PS-3.1. Decisions on land use and development have the potential to impact groundwater conditions within the County.

WHEREAS, the Board of Supervisors of the County of Monterey have considered reasonable measures that address the conditions identified in the Investigation Report. Given the overlap in land use decisions by the County and groundwater sustainability planning by the applicable GSAs, the recommendation of the Investigation Report to “consider groundwater in land use planning” by coordinating with the GSAs (Recommendation 2 of the Investigation Report) is appropriate to align the two efforts to ensure land use decisions consider GSPs and do not affect groundwater sustainability efforts.

WHEREAS, the language of General Plan Policy PS-3.1 should be updated to reflect the Investigation Report has been received and that the County will coordinate with GSAs in land use in groundwater sustainability efforts.

WHEREAS, the Investigation Report was brought before the public on August 27, 2024, and continued for 60 days to November 12, 2024 to allow time for the public to review.

WHEREAS, the public provided comments to the County on the Investigation Report, which have been considered and responded to as provided in Attachment D to the Board of Supervisors staff report.

WHEREAS, receiving the Investigation Report is not a Project under CEQA Guidelines section 15378(b)(5), as this activity is administrative and will not result in direct or indirect physical changes in the environment.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Monterey County Board of Supervisors hereby approves the following:

- a. Finding that receiving the Salinas Valley Groundwater Basin Investigation Report (“Investigation Report”) is not a project under California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines section 15378(b)(5);
- b. Acknowledging receipt of the Investigation Report prepared pursuant to Policy PS-3.1 of the 2010 Monterey County General Plan;
- c. Directing staff to coordinate with applicable groundwater sustainability agencies to align groundwater sustainability efforts with land use decisions as a measure that will address the groundwater conditions described in the Investigation Report; and
- d. Directing staff to prepare a General Plan amendment to update Policy PS-3.1.in light of the completed investigation.

PASSED AND ADOPTED upon this 4th day of December, 2024, by the following vote:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

I, Valerie Ralph, Clerk of the Board of Supervisors of the County of Monterey, State of California, hereby certify that the foregoing is a true copy of an original resolution of said Board of Supervisors duly made and entered in the minutes thereof Minute Book ___ for the meeting on November 12, 2024.

Dated:
File Number: RES 24-
Agenda Item:

Valerie Ralph, Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
County of Monterey, State of California

By _____
Deputy