



Monterey County

168 West Alisal Street,
1st Floor
Salinas, CA 93901
831.755.5066

Board Report

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June 29, 2017

Introduced: 6/27/2017

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Current Status: Agenda Ready

Matter Type: General Agenda Item

Consider authorizing the CAO to transmit a letter on behalf of the County of Monterey to the State Water Resources Control Board not later than June 30, 2017 indicating that the County will be the Groundwater Sustainability Agency for any areas in the Salinas Valley Groundwater Basin within Monterey County that are declared “unmanaged” by the State Board pursuant to the provisions of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Board of Supervisors:

Authorize the CAO to transmit a letter on behalf of the County of Monterey to the State Water Resources Control Board indicating that the County will be the Groundwater Sustainability Agency for any areas in the Salinas Valley Groundwater Basin within Monterey County that are declared “unmanaged” by the State Board pursuant to the provisions of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act.

SUMMARY:

The Sustainable Groundwater Management (“SGMA”) provides that Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (“GSA”) be established by June 30, 2017, for groundwater basins that are “high” or “medium” priority as determined by the Department of Water Resources. SGMA further provides that counties are the default GSA for any areas in a basin for which a GSA has not been otherwise established by that date and which the State Water Resources Control Board (“State Board”) declares “unmanaged,” unless the county opts out of that designation. Many counties are submitting “protective” letters indicating that they are accepting the GSA role in the event areas are declared unmanaged to avoid the basin being declared “probationary” and the state dictating management of the basin. It is recommended that Monterey County transmit such a letter for the Salinas Valley Groundwater Basin in Monterey County (“Basin”).

DISCUSSION:

The Basin is a combination of high and medium priority sub-basins, and one or more GSAs must be formed for those sub-basins by June 30, 2017. If any area of any sub-basin is declared unmanaged by the State Board the County will be the default GSA unless it opts out. A sub-basin may also be declared unmanaged if there is overlap in the areas of any legitimately formed GSAs.

The Salinas Valley Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency (“SVBGSA”) was recently established with the participation of the County, the Water Resources Agency, and other public entities in the Basin. The area the SVBGSA proposes to manage is the entirety of the Basin with the exception of the jurisdictional boundaries of the Marina Coast Water District and the City of Greenfield. Other GSAs have purported to be formed, including by the Marina Coast Water District, the City of Greenfield, and the San Lucas Water District, each of which

proposes to manage areas outside their jurisdictional boundaries. The SVBGSA believes in some respects these GSAs are not legitimate under SGMA, but overlaps have been created with the SVBGSA management area by the filings of these other GSAs.

In an abundance of caution, it is recommended that the County transmit a letter to the State Board prior to June 30, 2017, indicating that it will be the GSA for any areas declared unmanaged in order to avoid any sub-basin being declared probationary and subject to state jurisdiction.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

N/A

FINANCING:

There is no impact to the General Fund in Fiscal Year 2016-17 with the transmittal of the letter. If the County assumes the GSA role for any area certain expenditures will be required in order to manage those areas. Specific funding needs and sources will need to be identified at that time next Fiscal Year.

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS STRATEGIC INITIATIVES:

Check the related Board of Supervisors Strategic Initiatives:

- Economic Development
- Administration
- Health & Human Services
- Infrastructure
- Public Safety

Prepared by:

Approved by:

Leslie J. Girard
Chief Assistant County Counsel
Dated: June __, 2017

Lew C. Bauman
County Administrative Officer
Dated: June __, 2017

Attachments:

(none)