



# Today's Action

- a. Review the findings and recommendations of the 2025-2026 Monterey County Civil Grand Jury (CGJ) report titled “Seawater Intrusion - A Shared Problem in Monterey County”; and,
- b. Consider the draft response to the above-referenced 2025-2026 Civil Grand Jury report; and,
- c. Authorize the Board’s response to be filed with the Presiding Judge of the Superior Court.

# Background

- Monterey County Civil Grand Jury (CGJ) Investigated seawater intrusion and groundwater sustainability in the Salinas Valley through document review, public meeting observation, site visits, and interviews.
- The CGJ transmitted their approved Final Report, “Seawater Intrusion – A Shared Problem in Monterey County” on May 11, 2026
  - A response is required within 90 days



# Civil Grand Jury Report

## Seawater Intrusion - A Shared Problem

- Thoughtful, well sourced, and generally, we agree:
  - “The Civil Grand Jury (CGJ) recommends that the governing boards of the Salinas Valley Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency (SVBGSA) and the Monterey County Board of Supervisors establish clear implementation timelines, identify sustainable funding mechanisms, and advance specific mitigation projects to construction.”
- Specifically, we offer practical responses.



# Civil Grand Jury Report

## Seawater Intrusion - A Shared Problem

- The Report offers 4 Findings & Recommendations:
  - F&R 1 and 4 specific to the Salinas Valley Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency.
  - F&R 2 specific to the Water Resources Agency Board of Directors
  - F&R 3 specific to the County of Monterey Board of Supervisors



# Civil Grand Jury Report

## Seawater Intrusion - A Shared Problem

- Finding #2:
  - “...infrastructure has not been implemented in other areas [outside of the existing Castroville Seawater Intrusion Project] experiencing groundwater stress.”
- The WRA Board of Directors agree.



# Civil Grand Jury Report

## Seawater Intrusion - A Shared Problem

- Recommendation #2:
  - “...prepare and publicly present a feasibility and financing plan identifying options to expand existing alternative water supply infrastructure, or develop new projects, including the Castroville-Eastside Project, to reduce groundwater extraction in coastal aquifers outside the current Castroville service area by March 31, 2027.”
- The WRA Board of Directors agrees with the intent but will not implement because it is impractical.



# Civil Grand Jury Report

## Seawater Intrusion - A Shared Problem

- Rationale:
  - The SVBGSA is responsible for groundwater management planning.
  - For the WRA to undertake an independent effort, we risk:
    - worsening public confusion regarding SGMA roles and responsibilities;
    - duplicative efforts or competing proposals;
    - higher costs.



# Civil Grand Jury Report

## Seawater Intrusion - A Shared Problem

- Finding #3:
  - “...the State Water Resources Control Board may intervene [in SGMA implementation], which could result in mandatory pumping reductions and increased regulatory oversight.”
- The County of Monterey Board of Supervisors agree.



# Civil Grand Jury Report

## Seawater Intrusion - A Shared Problem

- Recommendation #3:
  - “[...][the BOS] conduct a publicly noticed study session to evaluate long-term funding mechanisms to support groundwater sustainability projects developed by SVBGSA and direct staff to report back with recommended funding options by June 30, 2027.”
- The Board of Supervisors agree and recommend that the purpose of the session be expanded to consider a wider array of water management challenges.



# Civil Grand Jury Report

## Seawater Intrusion - A Shared Problem

- Rationale:
  - Many water management and development problems and solutions are interrelated;
  - Collectively, the sum of independent proposals, if implemented in similar timeframes, could create an overwhelming financial burden upon the communities served;
  - The Board of Supervisors propose to establish a forum regionalizing water management planning to develop an integrated regional strategy.

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