

Salinas Valley Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency Advisory Committee Charter and Bylaws

Charge

The purpose of the Advisory Committee (“Committee”) is to provide input and recommendations to the Board of Directors (“Board”) of the Salinas Valley Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency (“Agency”). At the request of the Board, the Committee reviews and provides recommendations to the Board on groundwater-related issues.

Brown Act, Open Process and Conflicts of Interest

1. The Committee meetings are subject to the Brown Act and open to the public. The Committee shall adopt a schedule and location for regular meetings, and meeting agendas shall be posted in compliance with the Brown Act.
2. The Board maintains an interested parties list, uses an application process, and makes appointments to the Committee.
3. Members of the Committee are subject to all applicable conflict of interest laws including Government Code section 1090 and the California Political Reform Act. The Committee adheres to the Board’s conflict of interest code.

Roles and Responsibilities

Agency Board

The Board recognizes the value of the Committee and takes into account the Committee recommendations when making its decisions.

Advisory Committee

The Committee considers and incorporates community and stakeholder views into consensus recommendations, with the focus on SGMA implementation in the Salinas Valley Groundwater Basin, for the Board consideration its decision-making process.

The Committee members represent the diverse interests of the agencies and groundwater users in the Agency’s jurisdiction. The expectations for Committee members are to:

- Serve as a strong effective advocate
- Work collaboratively with others
- Commit time needed for understanding the issues
- Collectively reflect diversity of views
- Conduct focused and productive deliberations.

Work Groups

The Committee may establish work groups to periodically address specific issues. Work groups are tasked with considering particular matters and developing recommendations for the Committee to contemplate and refine before communicating the outcome with the Board. Work groups consist of a small number of participants, which may but do not need to be, members of the Committee consisting of or including less than a quorum of the Committee. The work group participants are expected to have expertise related to the specific issue, and to reflect a diversity of interests when possible. The Committee defines the scope and objectives for each work group.

Role of the Chair

The Chair is selected by a majority vote of the Committee at the first meeting of each calendar year, unless otherwise modified. The newly elected Chair's term begins at the close of that Committee meeting;

The Chair remains as one member of the Committee and has no rights or authority different from any other member except as set forth below:

- Ensures that the work of the Committee is consistent with its Charter and Bylaws;
- Provides input to staff for preparation of the Committee meeting agenda;
- Runs the meeting of the Committee; calls the meeting to order, presides over the meeting, including the conduct of members and those in attendance; and,
- Provides guidance to the Committee fairly and impartially.

The Committee also selects a Vice-Chair to act in the Chair's absence. If both the Chair and Vice-Chair are absent, the Committee selects a Chair Pro Tem to conduct the meeting.

Decision Making

To inform the Board's decision-making, the Committee provides written recommendations on matters that the Board assigns to the Committee. The recommendations identify and synthesize points of agreement and disagreement.

The Committee strives to reach consensus on its recommendations. The definition of consensus spans the range from strong support to neutrality, to abstention, to "I can live with it," to "I will let this go forward." When unable to reach consensus on recommendations, the Committee outlines the areas of agreement and disagreement providing adequate explanation in a summary report to the Board.

The Committee may request that one or more Committee members present its recommendations to the Board, including areas of agreement and disagreement, consistent with the Committee deliberations.

Membership

Membership Structure

The Advisory Committee shall consist of 11 to 13 members, appointed to represent key stakeholder groups and subbasin implementation areas, as follows:

Seat Type	Number of Seats
180/400 Subbasin Committee	1
Eastside Subbasin Committee	1
Langley Subbasin Committee	1
Monterey Subbasin Committee	1
Forebay Subbasin Committee	1
Upper Valley Subbasin Committee	1
Monterey County Water Resources Agency	1
Arroyo Seco GSA	1

Seat Type	Number of Seats
Marina Coast Water District GSA	1
Monterey One Water	1
Board-Designated Members	Up to 3
Total Seats: 11 to 13	

Advisory Committee members may not concurrently serve on the SVBGSA Board of Directors either as a primary or alternate member.

Each appointed member shall serve a term of three (3) years and, to maintain continuity, shall hold office until their successor is appointed. Members may be reappointed for additional terms.

Nomination and Selection Process

A. Nomination Guidelines

1. Subbasin Committee Nominations

Each subbasin implementation committee (e.g., 180/400, Eastside, Langley, Monterey, Forebay, Upper Valley) shall nominate one individual to serve as its representative on the Advisory Committee.

- Nominees must demonstrate a record of involvement in groundwater management or water-related issues.
- Nominees need not reside or work within the respective subbasin but must show active engagement or interest in the subbasin's groundwater concerns.
- Nominees may but are not required to be existing members of the subbasin implementation committee.

These nominations must be endorsed by the respective subbasin implementation committee.

2. Partner Agency/Organization Nominations

The following agencies shall nominate one individual each:

- Monterey County Water Resources Agency
- Arroyo Seco GSA
- Marina Coast Water District GSA
- Monterey One Water.

These nominations must be endorsed by the governing board of the nominating agency and submitted in writing.

3. Board-Designated Appointments (Up to Three Seats)

The SVBGSA Board of Directors may appoint up to three individuals to serve on the Advisory Committee to fill identified gaps in representation (e.g., environmental, rural residential, tribal, industrial, underserved communities), enhance expertise or geographic balance and foster collaboration across sectors.

- An application process will be opened to solicit interest from community members at large to fill these seats
- Preference shall be given to individuals not already affiliated with the nominating groups.

B. Required Nomination/Application Materials

Each nominating body (including subbasin committees, agencies, or organizations) shall submit the following to the SVBGSA Board for review:

1. Nomination Letter or Resolution

A formal letter or adopted resolution naming the nominee and confirming the nominating body's approval.

2. Nominee/Applicant Information Form (to be developed by SVBGSA staff) that includes:

- Full name and contact information
- Current organizational affiliation and role (if any)
- Subbasin(s) of interest (if applicable)
- Description of experience and interest in groundwater, water management, or SGMA
- Statement of availability and commitment to regularly participate in meetings
- Any relevant community affiliations or stakeholder perspectives they represent (e.g. environmental, rural residential, tribal, industrial, underserved communities).

3. Optional Attachments

- Resume or CV
- Letter(s) of support or endorsement

C. Review and Selection Process

1. Board Review

All submitted nominations and applications will be compiled and reviewed by SVBGSA staff and presented to the Board in a public meeting.

2. Evaluation Criteria and Process

The Board will consider the following criteria in selecting Advisory Committee members:

- Diversity of stakeholder perspectives represented
- Demonstrated experience or interest in groundwater management
- Regional balance across the valley
- Willingness and ability to commit time and participate actively
- Complementarity with other members' backgrounds and skills.

3. Appointment Timing

The Board will aim to make the appointments at least one month before the next scheduled Advisory Committee meeting cycle. Newly appointed members will begin service immediately following confirmation.

4. Vacancies

Should a seat become vacant, the original nominating body will be asked to submit a replacement nomination within 60 days. If there is a vacancy in a Board-Designated seat, the Board may leave it vacant, appoint an individual who submitted an application in a prior solicitation or conduct a new solicitation.

Process Agreements

To create a productive environment and conduct a successful process, the Committee members agree to these process agreements used during the meetings:

- **Everyone agrees to negotiate in good faith.** All Committee members agree to participate in decision making, to act in good faith in all aspects of this effort and to communicate their interests during meetings. Good faith also requires that parties not make commitments they do not intend to follow through with, and that parties act consistently in the meetings and in other forums where the issues under discussion in these meetings are also being discussed.
- **Everyone agrees to address the issues and concerns of the participants.** All Committee members have a stake in the issue at hand. For the process to be successful, all the parties agree to validate the issues and concerns of the other parties and strive to reach an agreement that takes all the issues under consideration. Disagreements will be viewed as problems to be solved, rather than battles to be won.
- **Agreements stand even if representatives change.** New Committee members agree to uphold previous agreements reached.
- **Everyone agrees to inform their leadership and constituents about the outcome of the facilitated discussions.** Meeting scheduling will allow for the Committee members to inform and seek advice from their leadership, constituents, attorneys, and scientific advisors about the discussions and negotiated outcomes. The Committee members can express conditional support to an agreement but will need to solicit input and support in their organization or interest group caucus before reaching final agreement.
- **Everyone agrees to attend all the meetings to the extent possible.** Continuity of the conversations and building trust are critical to the success of the Committee. Every effort will be made to accommodate all Committee members when setting the schedule for meetings and publishing the agendas.
- **Everyone agrees that parties can meet with other organizational or interest group members;** however, such meetings must include less than a quorum of the Committee members, and there cannot be serial meetings with the same organizations or interest group members such that a quorum or more of Committee members meet. The Committee members may find it helpful to caucus or meet with other organizations or interest group members and to consult with constituents outside of the meeting or to talk privately with other meeting participants. The Committee members or the Chair can request a caucus. Participants agree to use caucuses as a tool to move agreements forward and explore topics of concern. The Chair may attend and consult with parties during caucus discussions.

Participation Agreements

The Committee members work together to create a problem-solving environment and to implement these agreements to that aim.

- **Use Common Conversational Courtesies**
- **All Ideas and Points of View Have Value.** All ideas have value in this setting. We are looking for innovative ideas. The goal is to achieve understanding. Simply listen, you do not have to agree. If you hear something you do not agree with or you think is "silly" or "wrong," please remember

that the purpose of the forum is to share ideas.

- **Be Honest, Fair, and as Candid as Possible.** Help others understand you and work to understand others.
- **Avoid Editorials.** It will be tempting to analyze the motives of others or offer editorial comments. Please talk about *your own* ideas and thoughts. Avoid commenting on why you believe another participant thinks something.
- **Honor Time and Be Concise.** People's time is precious; treat it with respect.
- **Think Innovatively and Welcome New Ideas.** Creative thinking and problem solving are essential to success. "Climb out of the box" and attempt to think about the problem in a new way.
- **Invite Humor and Good Will**

Communication & Media

The Agency staff serves as primary contacts for all communication, outreach and media. At the request of the Board, or staff, the Committee may advise on outreach and community engagement.

The Committee members reserve freedom to express their own opinions to media representatives, but not the opinions of others. The temptation to discuss someone else's statements or position should be avoided.

If contacted by the press or an external party concerning the discussions, the Committee members are asked to:

- Point out that they are not speaking on behalf of the Committee, unless specifically authorized by the Committee to do so
- Present their views only and conscientiously refrain from expressing, characterizing, or judging the views of others
- Avoid using the press as a vehicle for negotiation.

Amendments

The Committee can recommend future changes to the charter and by-laws. The Board may amend the Charter and Bylaws when needed.

Version History

V1: Date 05/11/23

V2: Date 06/12/25