

MONTEREY COUNTY

WATER RESOURCES AGENCY

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August 3, 2016

The Honorable Mark E. Hood
Presiding Judge of the Monterey County Superior Court
240 Church Street
Salinas, CA 93901

Dear Judge Hood:

Re: Monterey County Water Resources Agency's Response to Monterey County Civil Grand Jury 2016 Report Titled, "Striving for Sustainability"

Pursuant to a letter dated June 15, 2016 from the Monterey County Civil Grand Jury, the Monterey County Water Resources Agency hereby submits the enclosed response/comments to the abovementioned report. As noted in the letter, the Agency is responsible for responding to Findings Nos. F1-F16 and Recommendation Nos. R1 – R5. As requested, the findings, recommendations and related responses are presented in table format for ease in accessing the information.

Please do not hesitate to contact me by email at chardavoyne@co.monterey.ca.us or telephone at (831) 755-8906 with any questions or concerns that may arise.

Sincerely,

Enclosure (1)

cc: Clerk to the Board of Supervisors, County of Monterey
Clerk to the Board of Supervisors, Monterey County Water Resources Agency
Clerk to the Board of Directors, Monterey County Water Resources Agency

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**Monterey County Water Resources Agency
Response to Monterey County Civil Grand Jury Report
“Striving for Sustainability”**



Finding Number	Finding	Response
F1	Monterey County is critically dependent on groundwater for both its agricultural and urban water demands.	Agree
F2	Groundwater is critically important to Monterey County's economy.	Agree
F3	Several groundwater basin aquifers in Monterey County are now in overdraft.	Agree
F4	Overdrafting has resulted in seawater intrusion into the 180 and 400 Foot aquifers in the northern Salinas Valley Basin.	Partially disagree – Although the Pressure Subarea has been designated a critically-overdrafted basin, the driving force of seawater intrusion in the Pressure Subarea has been pumping along the coast, coupled with a lack of Salinas River recharge to the Pressure Subarea
F5	Seawater intrusion results in localized salt-contaminated groundwater that is unsuitable for both urban and agricultural uses.	Agree
F6	If no Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) is formed by June 30, 2017 for the Salinas Valley Basin, the County of Monterey could then choose to become the GSA for the basin.	Agree
F7	If the County of Monterey chose to become the GSA for the Salinas Valley Basin that choice would prevent the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) from intervening in the local Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) planning process except for overseeing and insuring GSP compliance.	Agree
F8	Prior to the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA), local groundwater management plans lacked sufficient enforcement authority to fully manage groundwater sustainability.	Agree
F9	SGMA confers on GSAs stronger enforcement authority than had existed under previous groundwater management enactments or local plans.	Agree
F10	The non-adjudicated Salinas Valley Marina Area and the Salinas Valley Corral de Tierra Area should be included under the authority of the Salinas Valley Basin GSA and part of the GSA's Groundwater Management Plan (GMP).	Agree – if the GMP referenced actually means the Groundwater Sustainability Plan to be developed by the GSA

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F11	Consensus Builders, Inc. has been retained by the City of Salinas, on behalf of itself and others, in an attempt to integrate competing Salinas Valley groundwater interest's in order to arrive at a consensus GSA before June 30, 2017.	Agree
F12	Many local individuals and entities have for several years been vitally interested in preserving, enhancing, and sustaining both groundwater and surface water availability in the Monterey Peninsula-Salinas Valley areas.	Agree
F13	As a result of past efforts, there are several existing and planned projects that could logically be included in any GSPs adopted within the Monterey Peninsula-Salinas Valley areas, since each such project impacts groundwater sustainability.	Agree
F14	Some of the existing and planned projects for logical inclusion in a local GSP include:	See respective answers for each project or program below...
a.	The Salinas Valley Reclamation Plant (SVRP) and the Castroville Seawater Intrusion Project (CSIP) Distribution System	Agree – existing infrastructure
b.	The Pure Water Monterey Groundwater Replenishment Project	Agree – when project comes on-line
c.	The Soledad Water Recycling / Reclamation Project	Agree – when project comes on-line
d.	The Salinas Valley Water Project	Agree – existing infrastructure
e.	The Seaside Aquifer Storage & Recovery Project	Agree – existing infrastructure
f.	The California Statewide Groundwater Elevation Monitoring Program	Agree
g.	The Groundwater Extractions Monitoring System	Agree – existing program, needs expansion
h.	The Salinas River Arundo Removal Project	Agree – existing program, need to retain and maintain permits
i.	The Interlake Tunnel Project	Agree – when project comes on-line
j.	The Cal-Am Monterey Peninsula Water Supply Project	Agree – Depends which Desalination project is built, or if there are multiple projects
k.	The DeepWater Desal Desalination/Data Center Project	Agree – Depends which Desalination project is built, or if there are multiple projects
l.	The Marina Coast Water District Desalination Project	Agree – Depends which Desalination project is built, or if there are multiple projects

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m.	The People’s Moss Landing Water Desalination Project	Agree – Depends which Desalination project is built, or if there are multiple projects
n.	The Sand City Water Supply Project	Agree – existing infrastructure
o.	Urban Water Conservation	Agree – all conservation is important, though reducing the urban component of 10% used in the Salinas Valley by 20% will not provide the largest effect on the Salinas Valley Groundwater Basin as would Agricultural Water Conservation methods
p.	Agricultural Water Conservation	Agree – continued Agricultural Water Conservation efforts need to be championed and incentivized for additional participation
F15	As with other legislation that impacts those with divergent interests, legal maneuvering and delaying tactics can, in the case of SGMA, cause the loss of local controls over groundwater planning and management.	Agree
F16	As with other legislation that impacts those with divergent interests, legal maneuvering and delaying tactics can, in the case of SGMA, cause already critical groundwater conditions in Monterey County to get much worse, to the detriment of all concerned.	Agree

Rec Number	Recommendation	Response
R1	That every public and private entity interested in the formation of a GSA and the adoption of a GSP for the Salinas Valley Basin pledge to consider the groundwater needs of every other interested party with an open mind and a commitment to fairness.	Implemented – as part of the facilitated process with CBI, Inc. that includes a Collaborative Working Group (CWG) and hold Large Stakeholder Outreach meetings as part of their process.
R2	That if the June 30, 2017 deadline for forming one or more GSAs for the Salinas Valley Basin is not met by other interested parties, the County of Monterey agree to become the GSA for that basin in order to prevent state intervention in local groundwater planning.	Only the County (not the Agency) has the legal discretion to implement the recommendation. The Agency has expressed its willingness to cooperate with the GSA(s) ultimately formed or designated, including the County, in order to maintain local governance and control.

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R3	That the County of Monterey actively participate in the currently ongoing effort by Consensus Builders, Inc. to help achieve the formation of one or more GSAs for the Salinas Valley Basin before the June 30, 2017 deadline.	Implemented – the County has been involved in the CWG and Stakeholder meeting process.
R4	That the County of Monterey remain mindful of the possibility that it may become the GSA for the Salinas Valley Basin and, with that in mind, take all steps as far in advance of the June 30, 2017 deadline as necessary for it to assume that role prior to that deadline.	Only the County (not the Agency) has authority to implement the recommendation. The Agency is implementing the recommendation within its means, in that the Agency anticipates the formation or designation of local GSA(s) and factored the impact of participating in or supporting, a local GSA in its long range planning, anticipated staffing and funding, and long range / strategic planning.
R5	That the County of Monterey remain mindful of the possibility that it may become the GSA for the Salinas Valley Basin and, with that in mind, begin immediately to consider GSP optional components.	Only the County (not the Agency) has authority to implement the recommendation.