



*CC: Judge Hood 8/14/16*

# Monterey Regional Water Pollution Control Agency

*"Dedicated to meeting the wastewater and reclamation needs  
of our member agencies, while protecting the environment."*

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July 25, 2016

Monterey County  
Office of the County Counsel  
Attn: Mr. Charles McKee  
168 W. Alisal Street, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
Salinas, CA 93901-2439

Re: MRWPCA Response to 2015/16 Monterey County Civil Grand Jury Final Report – “Striving for Sustainability”

Dear Mr. McKee,

Thank you for allowing our Agency to review this very important document. MRWPCA is excited to be a part of the water solutions for northern Monterey County. By working together, the limited water resources can be mutually used that benefit multiple parties. The Agency has a few minor corrections on two of the graphics as well as some additional suggestions on the findings section in the report.

On Page 32, the graphic is not factually correct. The Existing (from SVRP Project) box, second from the right on the bottom, needs to be located above the Proposed New water sources box. The placement of the box would be below the MRWPCA Regional Waste Water Treatment Plant Box.

On Page 44, the Municipal Wastewater box on the bottom right should be placed in between the Pure Water Monterey Box and the MRWPCA Regional Wastewater Treatment box. That accurately portrays how these new waters will be mixed in with existing municipal wastewater.

As for the findings section, MRWPCA provides the following

1. Monterey County is critically dependent on groundwater for both its agricultural and urban water needs.

**The Agency agrees with the finding.**

2. Groundwater is critically important to Monterey County's economy.

**The Agency agrees with the finding.**

Joint Powers Authority Member Entities:

Boronda County Sanitation District, Castroville Community Services District, County of Monterey, Del Rey Oaks, Fort Ord, Marina Coast Water District, Monterey, Moss Landing County Sanitation District, Pacific Grove, Salinas, Sand City, and Seaside.

3. Several groundwater basin aquifers in Monterey County are now in overdraft.

**The Agency agrees with the finding.**

4. Overdrafting has resulted in seawater intrusion into the 180 and 400 foot aquifers in northern Salinas Valley Basin.

**The Agency agrees with the finding.**

5. Seawater intrusion results in localized salt-contaminated groundwater that is unsuitable for both urban and agricultural uses.

**The Agency agrees with this finding, with clarification. As of now the water is unsuitable for both urban and agriculture use, however if advanced water treatment becomes available, this water source could be treated and used.**

6. 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 that basin.

**The Agency's understanding of the GSMA includes the following options.**

- **A local agency has decided to become a GSA that intends to develop a GSP for the entire basin.**
  - **A collection of local agencies has formed a GSA or prepared agreements to develop one or more GSPs that will collectively serve as a GSP for the entire basin.**
  - **A local agency has submitted an alternative that has been approved or is pending approval pursuant to Section 10733.6.**
7. 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.

**The Agency partially disagrees with the finding. The Agency's understanding of the GSMA process would mean that the Collaborative Working Group has selected the County as the GSA. If the Collaborative Working Group does not select the County prior to June 30, 2017, then perhaps the County could become the GSA to avoid the SWRCB intervention.**

8. Prior to the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA), local groundwater management plans lacked sufficient enforcement authority to fully manage groundwater sustainability.

**The Agency agrees with this finding.**

9. SGMA confers on GSAs stronger enforcement authority than had existed under previous groundwater management enactments or local plans.

**The Agency agrees with this finding.**

10. 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).

**The Agency's understanding is that unless there are entities that are eligible and want to form their own GSA's for those basins, they would have to be represented in the larger county wide GSA.**

11. 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.

**The Agency agrees with this finding.**

12. 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.

**The Agency agrees with this finding.**

13. 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.

**The Agency agrees with this finding.**

14. Some existing and planned projects for logical inclusion in a local GSP include:
- a. The Salinas Valley Reclamation Plant (SVRP) and the Castroville Seawater Intrusion Project (CSIP) Distribution System.
  - b. The Pure Water Monterey Groundwater Replenishment Project
  - c. The Soledad Water Recycling/Reclamation Project
  - d. The Salinas Valley Water Project
  - e. The Seaside Aquifer Storage & Recovery Project
  - f. The California Statewide Groundwater Elevation Monitoring Program
  - g. The Groundwater Extractions Monitoring System
  - h. The Salinas River Arundo Removal Project
  - i. The Interlake Tunnel Project
  - j. The Cal-Am Monterey Peninsula Water Supply Project
  - k. The DeepWater Desal Desalination/Data Center Project
  - l. The Marina Coast Water District Desalination Project

- m. The People's Moss Landing Desalination Project
- n. The Sand City Water Supply Project
- o. Urban Water Conservation
- p. Agricultural Water Conservation

**Other projects that could be included are small wastewater system consolidation in addition to extending the boundaries of the MRWPCA to encompass more areas on septic systems. Another project is the capture and reuse of stormwater for beneficial use.**

15. As with other legislation that impacts those with divergent interest, legal maneuvering and delating tactics can, in the case of SGMA, cause the loss of local controls over groundwater planning and management.

**The Agency agrees with this finding.**

16. 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.

**The Agency agrees with this finding.**

As for the recommendations section, MRWPCA provides the following responses:

1. That every public and private entity interested in the formation of a GSA and the adoption of GSP for the Salinas Valley Basin to consider the groundwater needs of every other interested party with an open mind and a commitment to fairness.

**The Agency agrees with this recommendation.**

2. 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.

**The Agency recommends this item needs further analysis. If the County becomes the GSA by default, what would be the administrative process for putting a Board or staff or team together?**

3. 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 June 30, 2017 deadline.

**The Agency agrees with this recommendation.**

4. 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 the deadline.

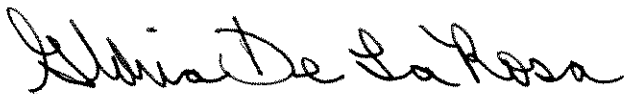
**The Agency recommends this item needs further analysis. This recommendation is contradictory with the previous recommendation. The effort by Consensus Builders, Inc. should result in one or more GSAs. If Monterey County starts to prepare for becoming a GSA then it undermines the ongoing effort. The Agency would support this recommendation if the Consensus Builders, Inc. process is unsuccessful.**

5. 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.

**The Agency feels that this recommendation is disruptive to Recommendation #3.**

The MRWPCA is committed to supporting the sustained use of groundwater in Monterey County. Groundwater is an important resource for both urban and agriculture sectors. Proper management will require sacrifices from both segments. However, there are also opportunities to implement innovative projects and technologies to make sustainable groundwater management a reality in the future.

Sincerely,



Gloria De La Rosa  
Board Chair, MRWPCA Board of Directors