

The Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) in the
Pauma Valley Groundwater Basin (PVGB)

Initial Feedback from Mutual Water Companies and Private Pumpers

November 10, 2016

The following list summarizes feedback, suggestions, and key concerns raised during SGMA-related interviews held with mutual water companies and private pumpers in the PVGB. The interviews were conducted during October 2016 by Senior Mediator, Dr. Marina Piscolith, of the Center for Collaborative Policy, CSUS.

- Strong desire to avoid State-control of groundwater (GW)
- General assumption that water cutbacks will be necessary to maintain sustainability
- Strong emotion by those who have lived and worked in the valley for many years/generations
- Private pumpers are diverse: inside and outside the imported water supply; corporate pumpers including commercial farming, nurseries and family farms.
- Pumpers residing within areas with access to imported supply worry about GW pumping restrictions and prohibitive water prices
- Pumpers outside of access to imported water supply worry about surviving
- Concern exists that past history of water conflicts and/or current context of power struggles will impede SGMA implementation
- The relative use of water between municipal water districts (MWD) and private pumpers/mutual water companies should be reflected in groundwater sustainability agency (GSA) governance structure and decision making
- Balanced representation of interests in the GSA is essential to fairness and sound decision making
- Concerns expressed that MWDs may be over-represented in the GSA
- Strive for equity in voice among MWDs, pumpers, mutual water companies, and Tribes
- Suggestion that those on the GSA should be elected. Advisory Group representatives should also be elected representatives
- Use objective criteria to determine who has a voice, and how much of a voice, on the GSA. Examples include: #cubic yards, #acre feet, #employees, #pumps, #people served, tenure in the valley, conservation IQ, etc.
- If “pay to play” is necessary for GSA participation, consider proportional payments so that everyone shares responsibility, while recognizing different financial realities
- Consider determining the cost of the groundwater sustainability plan (GSP) by acreage and proposing a local tax so that everyone shares the cost
- Consider using a “vulnerability index” to set restrictions or fees in a fair and compassionate way
- Consider a water user’s management practices when determining restrictions (i.e., more conservation = less restriction)
- Water wasting and water hoarding are issues that need to be factored in when setting restrictions
- Manage misinformation to avoid conflict
- Recognize upland versus valley floor differences in decision making
- Unclear how the GSA/GSP will consider *de minimis* water users