



GSA Board Agenda

From: Christopher Alakel, Utilities Director

Subject: Receive and file a proposed Statement of Equity and consider incorporating principles stated therein, in coordination with the other GSAs, into the next update of the Paso Basin Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP)

CEQA Determination: The City finds that this action is not a project under the California Environmental Quality Act pursuant to State Guidelines Section State CEQA Guidelines, §§ 15060, subd. (c)(2)-(3), 15378.

Date: June 20, 2023

Facts

1. In 2014, the California State Legislature passed and the Governor signed into law the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) which required local management of groundwater resources in California through the formation of Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs) and through preparation and implementation of Groundwater Sustainability Plans (GSPs).
2. The City of Paso Robles and three other local agencies (County of San Luis Obispo, the Shandon-San Juan Water District, and the San Miguel Community Services District) within the Paso Groundwater Subbasin (Basin), voted to form a GSA within their respective jurisdiction, such that the service areas of the GSAs collectively cover the entire Basin. These agencies are collectively referred to as the "Paso Basin GSAs."
3. Consistent with the options identified in Water Code Section 10727, the Paso Basin GSAs entered into a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) for the purpose of preparing a single GSP for the Basin and establishing the Paso Basin Cooperative Committee (PBCC) to conduct activities related to GSP development and SGMA implementation.
4. On June 21, 2022, the Paso Robles GSA Board adopted a revised Groundwater Sustainability Plan that was submitted to DWR on July 19, 2022 to comply with SGMA requirements. The next update of the GSP will be completed by January of 2025.
5. PBCC members voted unanimously at their April 26, 2023 regular meeting to have their GSAs consider adopting the Statement of Equity (attached) or otherwise incorporate the principles stated therein, in coordination with the other GSAs, into the next update of the GSP.
6. If incorporated into the GSP, the principles outlined in the Statement of Equity will be used to evaluate and rank future management actions and projects.

Options

1. Do nothing;
2. Receive and file with direction to staff to work in cooperation with other GSA's to incorporate the Statement of Equity into the next update of the GSP;
3. Provide alternative direction to staff.

Analysis and Conclusions

With the approval of the GSP, the GSAs are now focused on implementation of the projects and management actions that are identified in the GSP. Implementation measures will include bringing supplemental water into the Basin, which can be used in lieu of groundwater pumping. Potential supplemental sources of water that are being considered include the use of recycled wastewater from the City of Paso Robles and San Miguel Community Services District. Other supplemental water supply sources under consideration include the potential use of turn-back-pool water from the Nacimiento Pipeline Project partners, water from The State Water Project and expansion of the Salinas Dam. In conjunction with supplemental water supply projects under consideration, the GSAs are in the preliminary phases of developing management actions and programs that will be designed to reduce groundwater pumping across the Basin. Special consideration will be given to improving groundwater conditions in areas of the Basin where rural residents rely on domestic wells for their sole supply of drinking water.

With GSP implementation efforts underway, the PBCC members agreed that groundwater in the Basin is a shared resource that the GSAs seek to manage for the benefit of all Basin users, consistent with their rights under the California Constitution and state statutes. Sustainable management of a reliable groundwater supply is crucial to the ongoing health and wellbeing of our communities' residents and their economic interests.

To ensure that the commitment to fairness, among all those dependent on groundwater in the Basin, is considered as part of the implementation of the GSP and subsequent management of the Basin, the PBCC members voted unanimously at their April 26, 2023 to consider incorporating the concept of fairness with the proposed Statement of Equity into the next GSP update. Specifically, this means management actions and projects undertaken to balance the Basin will be evaluated against the Statement of Equity.

Fiscal Impact

None

CEQA

The City finds that this action is not a project under the California Environmental Quality Act pursuant to State Guidelines Section State CEQA Guidelines, §§ 15060, subd. (b)(2)-(3), 15378.

Recommendation

Staff has no recommendation for this item.

Attachments

1. Statement of Equity