

Tehama County
Wednesday, August 13, 2025 8:30 AM
Groundwater Commission
Meeting Minutes

Tehama County Board of Supervisors
Chambers
727 Oak Street, Red Bluff, CA 96080
<https://tehamacounty.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx>
Board Chambers

Commissioners: Martin Spannaus, City of Corning; Jeff Godwin, City of Red Bluff; Hal Crain, City of Tehama; Kris Lamkin, El Camino Irrigation District; Todd Hamer, Los Molinos Community Services District; Martha Slack, Rio Alto Water District; Liz Merry District 1; Adam Englehardt, District 2; Seth Lawrence, District 3; Michael Ward, District 4; David Lester, District 5;

Justin Jenson, Flood Control/Water Resources Manager; Lena Sequeira, Administration

Call to Order / Pledge of Allegiance / Introductions

8:31 AM

Present	Commissioner Martha Slack, Commissioner Kris Lamkin, Commissioner Michael Ward, Commissioner Seth Lawrence, Commissioner Hal Crain, Commissioner Martin Spannaus, Commissioner Adam Englehardt, and Commissioner Liz Merry
ABSENT	Commissioner Todd Hamer, Commissioner David Lester, and Commissioner Jeff Godwin

Public Comment

Liz Merry retracted her previous comment expressing displeasure with a law firm. She clarified that the firm provided the opinion on the 0.29 fee tax, but the county counsel chose not to follow it. She stated that the firm did not perform poorly; the decision was made by the county counsel.

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

25-1406

a) Waive the reading and approve the minutes of the regular meeting held 6/11/2025

RESULT: APPROVE

MOVER: Martha Slack

SECONDER: Michael Ward

AYES: Commissioner Slack, Commissioner Lamkin, Commissioner Ward, Commissioner Lawrence, Commissioner Crain, Commissioner

ABSENT: Spannaus, Commissioner Englehardt, and Commissioner Merry
Commissioner Hamer, Commissioner Lester, and Commissioner
Godwin

2. Estimated Funds Required Presentation

25-1416

Jenson provided an overview of the budget presentation, stating that the document was prepared with guidance from consultants and input from staff. He clarified that the figures reflect operating and compliance expenses and provided a detailed explanation of each expense category.

Jenson explained that PMA-based activities are divided into separate budgets for Demand Management and Well Mitigation. Incentive programs will be funded through Demand Management, while the well replacement program will be funded through Well Mitigation.

Englehardt asked if the funds will be held specifically for well replacement.

Jenson stated that the funds are maintained in a buffer account designated for Proposition 68 reimbursable expenses.

Englehardt asked if the yields from the account can be used to generate revenue.

Jenson confirmed that they can.

Discussion followed regarding baseline costs for Demand Management.

Merry asked how \$200 would address an acre-foot of water.

Jenson explained that the amount is a budgetary estimate rather than a fixed cost. He described several scenarios used to develop the estimate and how the number was determined.

Continued discussion took place on Demand Management and the overall budget breakdown.

Jenson reiterated that he is seeking input to present to the Board. He explained that expenditures are similar across programs, with variations based on which program implements the work. He discussed different approaches and suggested that incentive-based methods may be more effective than imposing additional fees.

Lester asked if the budget could be assessed annually.

Jenson responded that it represents a five-year estimate and can be adjusted as needed based on actual conditions.

Crain asked how many total irrigated acres are in the county.

Jenson replied that there are approximately 130,000 acres.

Discussion followed regarding fees, costs, and alternative implementation pathways.

Jenson commented that staff recommends breaking the budget into two sections.

Discussion followed on the timeline of grant funding, the volumetric method, and the number of wellheads.

Englehardt asked whether information is available from other subbasins.

Jenson responded that such data exists, but results vary widely. He encouraged the Commissioners to begin considering feedback and comments to share with the Directors, noting that each monthly meeting will build on the previous discussion until final recommendations are reached.

Further discussion took place regarding municipal water systems and the potential community impacts of charging fees.

Englehardt stated that he would like a better understanding of the assumptions behind the \$200 cost for incentives and the \$400 cost for projects.

Jenson responded that these figures will become clearer as Proposition 68 funding progresses.

Discussion followed on incentives and operating costs.

Jenson stated that, in his opinion, the group has a clear understanding of their current position.

Ward asked about spending projections and shared his perspective on long-term incentive projects.

Jenson explained that some elements of the plan are based on a five-year horizon and that funding will accumulate over time. He emphasized beginning baseline incentive activities immediately and recommended that fee collection start on day one.

Lawrence clarified that Well Mitigation funds may not be needed for the first few years; however, a dry year could require the use of all available funding.

Jenson agreed, stating that dry wells will be more challenging in certain years.

Slack asked if the fee structure that is decided will remain in place for five years.

Jenson stated that the fee will be set with a requirement to review it every five years, at which time adjustments may be made.

Englehardt asked how the use of surface water will be incentivized and whether that could be reflected in the fee structure

Jenson commented that by making groundwater more expensive, it creates an incentive to use surface water.

Lamkin stated that it may be useful to have an analysis of the fees showing what it would look

like if the state were to assume management. She reiterated that there would be no benefit, as the costs would simply be paid to the state.

Jenson agreed that comparing the total volumetric cost of each option would help inform decision-making.

There was discussion about providing meeting materials in advance for commissioner review.

Present	Commissioner Martha Slack, Commissioner Kris Lamkin, Commissioner Michael Ward, Commissioner Seth Lawrence, Commissioner Hal Crain, Commissioner Martin Spannaus, Commissioner Adam Englehardt, Commissioner David Lester, and Commissioner Liz Merry
ABSENT	Commissioner Todd Hemer, and Commissioner Jeff Godwin

3. Standing Agenda Items

25-1400

Groundwater Recharge

Jenson informed the group that outside legal services have been contacted to provide documentation on how to identify surface water supplies. This will help the group understand options for generating recharge. An Ad Hoc committee is associated with this effort and will compare available water with projects that use similar amounts.

Grant Status

Eddy Teasdale with LSCE provided an update on the grant status. He began by explaining the concept of DWR managing the subbasins, noting that if this were to occur, it would be temporary.

Teasdale began by discussing Demand Management and noted that there are two separate tracks. The Corning Subbasin is required to have its demand management program in place by 2027, while Tehama's must be completed by 2026. He presented the framework document developed by CSAB and reviewed the next steps related to demand management

There was discussion on the grant funds available to support the framework

Teasdale provided an update on the groundwater model and how it contributes to the periodic evaluation. He stated that efforts are being made to combine the models for the Tehama County and Corning subbasins, as it is inefficient to maintain separate models. He noted that it would be beneficial to utilize a single model countywide and explained the concept of extending the Tehama model into Glenn. Teasdale reviewed the different models currently in use and discussed the benefits of having one unified model across the county

There was discussion on the voluntary agreements in the Sacramento Valley

Teasdale stated that the GSPs have been approved and provided an explanation of the periodic evaluation, noting that efforts are being made to simplify the process to reduce the workload. He explained the difference between a periodic evaluation and an amendment, and noted that the next periodic evaluation is due in 2027

There was discussion on the process for submitting an amendment

Teasdale recommended moving forward with the periodic evaluation, noting that a plan amendment may be necessary in the future. He added that collecting additional data from the newly installed wells over the next few years would be beneficial.

There was discussion on setting MOs and MTs.

Teasdale stated that the GSFs were submitted to DWR and approved but noted that there are corrective actions to be addressed in the periodic evaluation. He reviewed those requirements. Jensen stated that this will be brought back to the board for consensus.

Teasdale explained that the funds are set to expire in 2026 and noted there is hope that some may be extended through that year, though an official response is still pending. He provided a snapshot of projects requiring feasibility studies, noting that all but one have been completed.

Teasdale provided an update on the status of water rights for groundwater recharge purposes.

An update on water rights was provided, noting that signatures are still pending. Once received, temporary water rights for recharge will be established. It was explained that if a declaration of imminent danger of flood is issued in the county, there is an opportunity to divert flood flows. The potential volumes are significant if storage options are available for later use, and it was noted that using surface water will be more cost-effective than pumping groundwater.

Public Comment

A resident asked about the Bowman Subbasin.

Teasdale responded that Bowman did not receive funding through this grant for Bowman-specific projects, which is why it is not shown on the map.

Teasdale provided an update on the well monitoring video cameras that were purchased. He stated that funds are available to perform video inspections on wells, and the intent is for residents to be able to use the cameras on their own wells.

Jensen commented that another potential benefit is determining whether a well is actually dry or if it has collapsed.

Hal asked about the cost.

Teasdale responded that the cost is \$9,000 each and noted that previously, a contractor had to be hired each time a video inspection was needed.

Spannaus asked how deep the cameras go.

Teasdale stated that he believes the cameras can reach depths of up to 1,000 feet.

Demand Management

Jenson provided an update, stating that a meeting has just occurred and the response list is being reviewed. He noted that the STRAW proposal has been presented and hopes discussions will begin with this group after one more meeting

Well Mitigation

Jenson provided an update, stating that the first working group meeting is now being scheduled. He noted that a proposal is in place, so the meeting will focus on providing commentary for potential changes

Annual Report

Jenson stated that this item was covered earlier in the meeting.

Outreach

Jenson informed the group that an outreach questionnaire email was sent out. The goal is to gather input on public perceptions of the issues at hand. He noted that once the data is received, an update will be provided and emphasized that completing the survey helps guide decision-making. Jenson asked attendees to promote the email, noting that the collected information could be very helpful in the future.

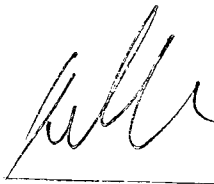
Merry commented on the survey, stating that she had issues completing it

4. Commission Matters


None

Adjourn

9:58 AM

APPROVED  _____
Chairperson

Tehama County Groundwater Commission

by  _____ Deputy