

TEHAMA COUNTY

**DRY WELL
MITIGATION
AD HOC AND
WORKING GROUP
OVERVIEW**

PREPARED FOR THE 11.12.2025
GROUNDWATER COMMISSION MEETING



WHO'S INVOLVED

Working Group & Ad Hoc Members

- Martin Spannaus (Tehama County Farm Bureau)
- Tia Branton (Tehama County Environmental Health)
- Commission Ad Hoc Members
 - Martha Slack (Rio Alto WD)
 - Seth Lawrence (District 3)
 - Todd Hamer (Los Molinos CSD)

Staff and Support

- Justin Jenson and Adriana Langarica (District)
- Stephanie Horii, Facilitator for Working Group (CBI)

WELL MITIGATION PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT PROCESS & CURRENT STATUS

Purpose

- DWR approved revised GSPs, included commitments to management actions (2025)
 - Board Resolution No. 3-2024 to develop Well Mitigation Program
- Address water well impacts from declining groundwater levels from GSA management activities during GSP implementation

Progress and Status:

- The initial straw proposal developed by the Ad Hoc during the summer
- Working Group met Sept 23 and Oct 16 to review the straw proposal and address remaining issues
 - *(Note: WG meeting information, including slides and audio recordings, are on [website](#))*
- Staff conducting outreach and potential coordination with related programs and potential partners

OBJECTIVES AND DISCUSSION TOPICS/ISSUES

Objectives & Guiding Principles

Fair and simple program

Focus help where it's needed

Fiscal responsibility

Timely, realistic service

Data-driven & Adaptive

Key Issues Discussed Included:

- Eligibility criteria and causation determination
- Application process and fee
- Age-of-well pro-rated
- Single reimbursement cap
- Reimbursement process
- Abandoning/sealing old well
- Well owner education
- Funding and financing
- Monitoring and adaptive management

MAJOR TRADEOFF CONSIDERATIONS

Objective decision-making vs. case-by-case evaluation

- data-driven aligned with the GSP
- Use representative monitoring sites (RMS) wells and the GSPs' Sustainable Management Criteria

Fairness across well ages vs. unrelated wear & tear

- 40-yr framework same as DWR estimates; 2.5%/yr pro-rated;
- potential for proxy evidence

Single program/cap vs. Separate customized

- Single program and cap across well types
- Fair, clear steps, doesn't "reward" major overpumping

Affordability vs. cost recovery; deter misuse

- Application fee should be high enough to cover initial assessment costs and deter frivolous claims yet stay affordable

(not a comprehensive list of topics discussed)

MAJOR TRADEOFF CONSIDERATIONS (CONTINUED)

Immediate water needs vs. Program costs

- District covering drinking water costs up 3-6 months
- Leverage NVCF drinking water program

Other cost-saving and fiscal responsibility strategies:

- Objective criteria to streamline determinations
- Aim to leverage internal resources and District staff as much as possible
- Leverage partnerships and existing programs like NVCF for emergency drinking water
- Require competitive contractor bids

(not a comprehensive list of topics discussed)

NEXT STEPS AND TOPICS STILL TO BE ADDRESSED

Next Steps

- No additional Working Group meetings planned at this time
- Legal review
- Board review and potential approval in December
- Program effective January 1, 2026
(may be a few months before District is ready to process first application)

Ongoing Issues for Program Development and Implementation

- Costs validation and long-term budgeting
- Legal considerations
- Implementation timing and staff/resource capacities
- Improving monitoring network in key data-sparse areas
- Well owner education and outreach