

# TEHAMA COUNTY GROUNDWATER COMMISSION



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

## AGENDA FOR WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 2026

---

### 8:30 AM

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

This meeting conforms to the Brown Act Open Meeting Requirements, in that actions and deliberations of the Groundwater Commission, created to conduct the people's business are taken openly; and that the people remain fully informed about the conduct of its business. Any written materials related to an open session item on this agenda that are submitted to the Clerk less than 72 hours prior to this meeting, and that are not exempt from disclosure under the Public Records Act, will promptly be made available for public inspection at Tehama County Flood Control and Water Conservation District, 1509 Schwab Street, Red Bluff, CA 96080 during normal business hours.

### **Call to Order / Pledge of Allegiance / Introductions**

### **Public Comment**

This time is set aside for citizens to address this Board on any item of interest to the public that is within the subject matter jurisdiction of this Board provided the matter is not on the agenda or pending before this Board. Each agenda item will have an opportunity for public comment at the time the item is called. Persons wishing to provide public comment are asked to address the Board from the podium. The Chair reserves the right to limit each speaker to three (3) minutes. Disclosure of the speaker's identity is purely voluntary during the public comment period.

For audio and real-time commenting via phone:

(530) 212-8376, conference code 142001. Press 5\* on your phone keypad to raise your hand

to comment.

For live audio of the meeting:

Go to: <https://tehamacounty.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx>

- 1. Selection of New Chair and Vice Chair [26-0173](#)**  
Nominate and confirm chair and vice chair.
- 2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES - October 8th 2025 [26-0171](#)**  
a) Waive the reading and approve the minutes of the regular meeting held 10/8/2025
- 3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES - October 15th 2025 [26-0172](#)**  
a) Waive the reading and approve the minutes of the regular meeting held 10/15/2025
- 4. Fees Update [26-0174](#)**
- 5. Demand Management Update [26-0175](#)**  
None
- 6. Outreach Ad Hoc Update [26-0176](#)**  
None
- 7. Standing Agenda Items [26-0178](#)**
  - 1. Groundwater Recharge
  - 2. Grant Status
  - 3. Demand Management Plan Working Group Update
  - 4. Annual Report Status
  - 5. Outreach
- 8. Commission Matters**

**Adjourn**

The County of Tehama does not discriminate on the basis of disability in admission to, access to, or operation of its buildings, facilities, programs, services, or activities. Questions, complaints, or requests for additional information regarding the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) may be forwarded to the County’s ADA Coordinator: Tom Provine, County of Tehama, 727 Oak St., Red Bluff, CA 96080, Phone: (530) 527-4655. Individuals with disabilities who need auxiliary aids and/or services or other accommodations for effective communication in the County’s programs and services are invited to make their needs and preferences known to the affected department or the ADA Coordinator. For aids or services needed for effective communication during Groundwater Sustainability Agency Groundwater Commission meetings, please contact the ADA Coordinator prior to the day of the meeting. This notice is available in accessible alternate formats from the affected department or the ADA Coordinator.



# Tehama County

## Agenda Request Form

---

**File #:** 26-0173

**Agenda Date:** 2/11/2026

**Agenda #:** 1.

---

### **Selection of New Chair and Vice Chair**

#### **Requested Action(s)**

Nominate and confirm chair and vice chair.

#### **Financial Impact:**

None

#### **Background Information:**

Annual nominations for new positions.



# Tehama County

## Agenda Request Form

---

**File #:** 26-0171

**Agenda Date:** 2/11/2026

**Agenda #:** 2.

---

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES - October 8th 2025**

#### **Requested Action(s)**

a) Waive the reading and approve the minutes of the regular meeting held 10/8/2025

#### **Financial Impact:**

None

#### **Background Information:**



Tehama County  
Wednesday, October 8, 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

## 8:30 AM

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

**Present** Commissioner Martha Slack, Commissioner Kris Lamkin, Commissioner Michael Ward, Commissioner Seth Lawrence, Commissioner Adam Englehardt, Commissioner David Lester, and Commissioner Liz Merry

**Absent** Commissioner Todd Hamer, Commissioner Hal Crain, Commissioner Martin Spannaus, and Commissioner Jeff Godwin

### Public Comment

A resident expressed their feelings on the management of groundwater water.

A resident with DWR for the Tehama County GSA shared some updates from DWR.

A resident expressed their concerns regarding taxes.

A resident on behalf of the Farm Bureau expressed their opinion on taxes, the proposed fees and recharge.

**1. Presentation on Well Levels by Frank Endres**

**25-1763**

Frank Endres presented a map of the wells he monitors and summarized each well's location, depth, and measured water levels. He noted fluctuations observed across the ten wells and shared that residents appreciate the attention to groundwater conditions. He also discussed the need to drill deeper when replacing dry wells and reviewed recent rainfall totals, stating his belief that groundwater levels should be improving. He concluded by taking questions.

There was brief discussion about adding more detail to the maps and providing the data to commissioners in advance.

Lawrence asked whether Endres would continue collecting measurements into the spring, noting the value of year-to-year data.

Endres responded that wells near the Sacramento River are not experiencing the same issues as those on the west side near the edge of the aquifer.

Merry observed that none of the wells shown were shallow wells.

Endres confirmed they were all deeper wells.

Merry suggested this may explain the lack of observed recharge.

Lawrence noted that deeper wells typically have a delayed response, making it difficult to determine real-time changes in groundwater conditions. He emphasized the importance of comparing spring-to-spring measurements to better understand how rainfall impacts water levels.

Endres shared his observations from last fall's rainfall and emphasized his opinion on the need for injection wells to support recharge. He also provided his perspective on the Black Butte project and the use of its water.

Ward noted that DWR has a system for making groundwater data available online to the public. He said he planned to upload some information to the platform and asked if Endres's data could be added as well.

Endres agreed and noted that he had recently signed an agreement with DWR to monitor two wells on his ranch, adding that this monitoring would be more formal than his personal measurements..

**2. Informational Presentation by the RCD on Irrigation Efficiencies**

**25-1765**

Amy with the Resource Conservation District (RCD) presented on effective irrigation and soil management strategies to support water conservation under SGMA. She provided an overview of the RCD's role and structure, noting that it is a community based organization led by local residents. Amy outlined the agency's services and

highlighted how they support local farmers and ranchers by improving irrigation efficiency, enhancing soil health, and assisting with securing funding for related projects.

She discussed the potential impacts SGMA may have on agricultural users, outlining what could occur and what actions can be taken, emphasizing that the long-term goal is to protect groundwater as a shared resource. Amy reviewed issues related to impacted soils and over-irrigation, along with the consequences of each. She also addressed how outdated equipment can lead to uneven water delivery and highlighted the benefits of upgrading irrigation systems. Amy shared comparative data showing increased water savings from system improvements and presented results from a UC Davis study demonstrating those efficiencies.

Discussion followed regarding average water savings and percentage reductions.

Amy outlined various practices that can improve irrigation efficiency, noting that although many of these approaches require higher initial costs, they typically lead to long-term savings. She also provided an overview of existing funding opportunities and additional funding expected in the near future.

Jenson asked whether there were any funding gaps where additional resources could provide support.

Amy responded that larger agricultural users often do not qualify for available funding, which she viewed as a flaw in the system. She noted that additional funding opportunities for larger operations would be beneficial, as they also need support to manage and reduce water use effectively.

She continued by outlining the types of assistance the RCD can provide, along with resources available through other local agencies. Amy also shared the RCD's contact information so members of the public could reach out for support.

Ward shared his perspective on the need to address in-lieu recharge sources and asked whether funding was available to repair damaged infrastructure.

Amy explained that there are a few programs available to support GSAs and outlined the funding options that individual users may qualify for.

Discussion followed on the available funding opportunities and the ways in which the RCD assists applicants in securing those funds.

Amy discussed block grants and noted that they are waiting to see whether the RCD will serve as a grant holder.

Englehardt commented that many users in the county have converted to groundwater and now need assistance paying for the infrastructure to return to surface water. He asked whether that transition would qualify as a water-saving activity eligible for grant funding.

Amy responded that eligibility depends on specific program guidelines, noting that some projects have been approved or denied based on criteria that are not always publicly detailed. She emphasized that funding decisions are made on a case-by-case basis.

Jenson noted the importance of maintaining a strong partnership with the RCD, emphasizing the value they bring in assisting stakeholders throughout the region.

Amy reiterated that the RCD is there to help and encouraged the group to make use of their services.

Spannaus shared his experience working with the RCD, noting that they have been very helpful. He added that he has seen significant cost savings and a substantial decrease in water use since utilizing their programs.

A resident shared their perspective on water savings and orchard expansion.

Jenson commented on the benefits of soil improvement for reducing water runoff.

Lawrence shared his experience with the RCD, noting positive results.

Merry asked whether the RCD had presented to the Farm Bureau.

Amy responded that they had been invited to give a presentation at one of the Farm Bureau's upcoming events.

**3. Annual Report Letter Red Bluff Subbasin WY 2024 25-1766**

Jenson informed the group that he never received the letter from DWR directly and instead obtained it from the website. He noted that the majority of the letter focused on monitoring and missed monitoring cycles. He emphasized the importance of determining what went wrong and stated that he is working with DWR to understand the issue. Jenson clarified that the District monitored all of its wells and submitted the data on time, and that the missed data appears to be a state-level issue, though collaboration may be needed to resolve it.

He also highlighted a comment in the letter recommending that the low-season monitoring period be extended from October to August, and he explained DWR's reasoning for suggesting the earlier start date.

Ward shared his concerns regarding the proposal to change the low-season monitoring period.

Jenson clarified that the goal is to explain monitoring on a continuous basis. He noted that the current monitors record multiple times per day, providing data that can be compared across all seasons.

Englehardt asked if the letter was associated with the annual report prepared by LSCE and inquired about who had approved that report.

Jenson responded that the annual reports are essentially data compilations submitted to DWR based on the information they require. He noted that this process is evolving and may soon become more detailed than a simple data submission, outlining his expectations for potential future changes.

Discussion followed on how annual reports might look if submitted in a different format and what potential outcomes or implications could result from those changes.

**4. Fees Presentation on Potential Rates 25-1762**

Jenson noted that decisions will be needed on fee structure and applicability and that this was the final presentation in the fee series. He clarified that the discussion was intended to gather input on methodologies, not to set fees.

He outlined a two-part fee structure consisting of administrative costs and action-based groundwater management fees, reviewed administrative expenses, discussed assessment options, noted exemptions for federal lands, and explained how each option could apply under different scenarios.

Discussion followed regarding fee breakdowns and groundwater usage, focusing on which parties would be subject to specific fees.

Jenson noted that legal input could affect the decisions made regarding fees.

Ward asked whether the fee structure would apply to all basins or only those within the county.

Jenson responded that it would apply to the five managed basins.

Ward commented that the Bowman Subbasin does not have regulatory burdens.

Jenson responded that the District currently manages the Bowman Subbasin, which does create an existing regulatory burden. He noted that removing Bowman from management would require action at the Board level. Jenson explained that the subbasins along the river are interconnected from north to south, emphasizing that the Bowman Subbasin contributes a significant amount of water to the Red Bluff Subbasin. He cautioned that failing to continue monitoring Bowman could lead to future issues.

Crain asked for additional details regarding the administrative budget.

Jenson provided clarification.

Discussion followed on basin connections and how fees could be allocated across basins.

Englehardt requested input on the differences between charging fees by basin versus countywide.

Jenson reiterated that the purpose of the discussion was to gather input on potential options in order to develop a consolidated list for consultant review.

Crain suggested using Butte County as a model for developing the fee structure, starting with what is legally required and identifying actions needed to meet those requirements.

Jenson responded that there are many possible approaches and emphasized the importance of staying within the scope of the options they intend to pursue.

Discussion followed regarding how the different scenarios could be implemented.

Crain referenced Butte County and asked whether any areas could be exempted from the fee structure.

Jenson reminded the group that no fee decisions are being made today; the goal is only to narrow down a list of methodologies for review. He explained how the work would be carried out, noting that it is not grant-funded. Since no fees are currently in place, there is no source of income at this time.

Discussion followed on the various ways users could be charged and how fee structures might differ inside versus outside the basins.

Englehardt shared his opinion that it makes the most sense to charge fees within the basins and asked whether it would be possible to assess fees on an acre-foot basis.

Jenson confirmed that it is possible and explained how an acre-foot-based fee could work in areas without meters. He noted that categories would need to be established with assumed volumetric use for each, resulting in a default fee unless actual usage is reported, which is recommended. He added that many users do have meters and programs in place to reduce water consumption.

Englehardt responded that the ultimate goal is to reduce water use, so it makes sense to structure fees in a way that rewards using less water for the same crop.

Discussion followed on charging based on assumed water use versus actual use, highlighting the benefits of using less water. The group also discussed the advantages of metering and reporting consumption.

Lawrence raised a concern that charging a per-well fee could be unfair, noting that one well might irrigate 1,000 acres while another only serves four acres.

Discussion followed regarding the fairness of the fees and the methodology of charging on a per-well basis.

County Counsel Daniel Klausner noted that he was not making a recommendation but observed that the question had arisen earlier. He asked whether it would be possible to calculate fees using both a per-well rate and a volumetric rate.

Jenson responded that a flat fee could be applied based on assumed usage.

Englehardt reiterated his opinion that agricultural users should be charged by the acre foot rather than a flat per-acre fee, noting that a flat fee could potentially limit future land use.

Discussion followed regarding future irrigation practices and potential impacts on land use.

Jenson explained that connections and residential users could be combined into one category, and the same could be done for rangeland. He added that while categories are feasible, staff recommendations would guide the final structure.

Slack asked for clarification regarding the benefits under Proposition 218.

Jenson responded that SGMA allows multiple methods for regulating fees. He explained the Proposition 218 process, as well as an alternative process similar to Proposition 218, including how the voting requirements differ.

He then presented the PMA cost breakdown, noting that these represent non administrative fee costs. Jenson reviewed the three PMA cost categories and explained what each includes. He added that there is substantial data available on typical water use rates, which helps estimate potential fees.

Jenson stated that if fees are assessed on a volumetric basis, the estimated cost would be approximately \$8 per acre-foot. He compared this to state intervention, noting that local management would cost roughly one-third of what the state would charge to administer a similar program.

Lester asked whether Jenson had confirmed the fee amounts that would be charged by the state.

Jenson responded that he had confirmed the state's fee amounts and stated that he believes the program can be administered locally at a significantly lower cost than the state.

He reviewed staff's recommendations, noting that key challenges include establishing assumed-use fees and annually developing volumetric use characteristics. He explained that each methodology carries its own administrative burden and emphasized that SGMA will continue to influence how and where water is used, making fee structures subject to change over time.

Discussion followed regarding the potential use of a flat administrative fee.

Slack shared her opinion that charging fees on an acre-foot basis provides a stronger nexus and would be less susceptible to legal challenge.

Jenson agreed stating that volumetric measure can be a very symbolic benefit.

Slack asked whether metering would be required to demonstrate reduced groundwater

use resulting from installed efficiency measures.

Jenson responded that if the District provides services to help reduce volumetric groundwater use, one likely requirement would be to demonstrate reductions through metering. He expressed hope that, over time, users would recognize the cost-saving benefits of metering. Jenson noted that users would need to provide proof of reduced water use to qualify for lower fees.

He also pointed out that Tehama County has a voter initiative prohibiting the County from mandating groundwater metering. As a result, volumetric use would need to be assumed unless users voluntarily choose to meter their wells, unless significant political action were taken to change the initiative.

Lester commented on behalf of the agricultural community, noting that in this situation it may be advantageous to meter groundwater use.

Jenson noted that many irrigators already know their water usage, so for most it would not be a significant burden. He added that as the program moves forward, meters will be provided as part of the incentive. District staff has recommended linking fees to volumetric use, which would involve assigning volumetric assumptions to each crop type. He continued by reviewing the different cost categories associated with the program.

Discussion followed regarding the fees that would be charged to domestic users.

Jenson emphasized the importance of well registration, noting that unregistered wells would be assumed to exist and subject to fees.

Lester shared his opinion regarding how fees should be applied to rangeland wells.

Discussion followed on the financial impact of fees to groundwater users.

Englehardt asked for clarification on staff's recommendation that an administrative fee be applied to each acre within the basin.

Jenson responded that the fee would not be applied per acre, but rather based on volumetric use and assigned accordingly. He noted that the consultants will provide the calculations based on their research.

Discussion followed regarding assumed water use and how fees would be allocated, including considerations of parcel boundaries and actual usage.

Godwin asked Jenson to clarify how the proposed methodology would impact the cities.

Jenson clarified that the methodology would not affect the cities. He explained that under volumetric assumptions, only the property associated with the water use would be billed and provided examples of how different scenarios could be applied.

Discussion followed on how the cities would receive the bills and how fees would be apportioned to users. The group also discussed the process for including the charges

on property tax statements.

### **Public comment**

A resident asked about water use by the state and recreation parks.

Jenson responded that the question would need to be addressed by the legal team, but noted that state and recreation parks account for only a small percentage of total water use.

A resident commented on the Corning GSA and shared their opinion regarding the CSGSA's participation, requesting a response from Justin.

Jenson responded by explaining the structure and management of the CSGSA.

The resident continued by discussing the inclusion of federal lands in the fee structures and shared their opinion on the proposed budget.

Jenson reiterated that no fees are being set today and that any recommendations will come from the consulting professionals.

A resident shared their opinion on holding a study session to further discuss the topic.

Lamkin provided an overview of the work completed on the fee structures.

A resident calling in from the Farm Bureau commented that it is difficult for stakeholders to participate in meetings during harvest season and shared their opinion on the proposed fee rate.

A resident emphasized the importance of informing the public before any fees are established.

Englehardt asked whether a decision on fees was required at today's meeting.

Jenson clarified that he is seeking recommendations to present to the next level and input on how the group would like to proceed.

Discussion followed on how recommendations should be compiled and on providing copies of relevant documents to the group.

Englehardt asked when public comments would be considered in the fee-setting process.

Jenson stated that a public hearing will be held, and that there will be ample opportunity for public input. He noted that questionnaires have been distributed and public outreach meetings are being planned. He reminded the group that he needs direction on preferred methodologies before presenting the proposals to the public.

Lawrence clarified that Jenson was seeking input on which fee methodologies the group supports and which they do not.

Jenson confirmed that was correct.

Ward asked for clarification on how costs per well and per acre would be calculated and allocated.

Jenson provided clarification.

The group requested a summary spreadsheet showing all proposed fee budgets. Discussion followed regarding the timing of its distribution, and the group agreed to review the spreadsheet and provide comments to Jenson by Thursday of the following week.

Englehardt questioned the proposed timeline.

Jenson explained that the District's grant funding will end next spring, and without it there will be no funds to continue operations. He noted that the District has previously relied on millions of dollars in grant support, which is now ending, and emphasized that a funding mechanism must be established to avoid groundwater management reverting to the state.

Discussion followed regarding the expiration of grant funding and the associated deadlines.

Englehardt emphasized the need for public outreach.

Discussion followed on potential fee amounts and what information would be needed to support effective public discussion on the topic.

Jenson clarified that the timeframe to implement these measures is between February and July of next year.

Merry asked whether this item would be presented at next week's Flood meeting.

Jenson confirmed that it would.

Merry shared her opinion that the upcoming Flood meeting should be publicly announced to allow for public feedback.

Jenson stated that he needed recommendations to present to the Board, emphasizing that he would like the volumetric method to be thoroughly reviewed. He noted the importance of providing clear direction to the fee consultants.

Lester clarified that Jenson is not seeking a vote at the Flood meeting, but rather recommendations from the group.

Jenson confirmed, noting that while there is a formal requirement to vote on fees, the current discussion is strictly for gathering recommendations.

A resident shared their opinion on the importance of taking sufficient time to review the

information before making a decision, and commented on the proposed timeline.

Jenson informed the group that they could schedule a special meeting if needed.

A resident asked the group to consider subsidizing fees for low-income users and inquired about the costs for residents without a well.

Lamkin commented that volumetric use was not an option when fees were first discussed, providing background on the fee-setting process prior to that time. She highlighted that changes in resources and political perspectives have made an assumptive use rate feasible now. Lamkin also noted that more data is available today, allowing for more equitable decision-making.

Lawrence asked the group whether they preferred to hold a special meeting next Wednesday or provide a recommendation today.

The group reached a consensus to schedule a special meeting.

Crain requested that the data be provided along with a detailed summary.

Jenson explained that the detailed data and summary would not be available until the consultants review the information, and that input from the group is needed to compile it.

The Groundwater Commission agreed to hold a special meeting on the following Wednesday.

## **5. Standing Agenda Items**

**25-1761**

### **Groundwater Recharge**

Jenson stated that an outside consultant is evaluating water availability and the timing of when it could be accessed. He explained that grant funding is available to support the diversion of floodwater during flood stages and reviewed how this process would work.

Discussion followed regarding the approval process.

### **Grant Status**

Jenson provided an update, noting that the topic included some unfavorable news. He stated that grant funding is expected to be terminated by spring 2026 and that a request for an extension was denied. Jenson added that staff is working to fully expend the remaining grant funds before the deadline.

### **Demand Management**

The initial review with legal counsel has been completed, and positive feedback was received. While no final conclusions have been made, there is strong support for the proposed methodologies. Jenson noted that he is hoping to receive a written response by next week.

**Well Mitigation:**

A meeting has been scheduled and will likely be the final meeting in the series. The group has a few remaining details to work through before the materials are submitted for legal review.

**Annual Report**

This item was discussed earlier in the meeting.

**Outreach**

A schedule is being developed for high-level outreach meetings. Once finalized, it will provide a clearer picture of the long-term outreach plan.

Ward asked how the expiration of grant funding would impact Demand Management.

Jenson responded that at the next CSAB meeting he hopes to discuss next steps and obtain direction from the Board on how to proceed.

Crain inquired about recharge efforts, asking whether the pilot projects were close to being ready and who would be accountable for keeping them on track.

Jenson responded that the consultants are responsible for keeping the projects on schedule and offered to provide an update at the next meeting.

A resident commented on the management of the Bowman Subbasin.

Crain asked whether that question should be directed to legal counsel.

Jenson said if the group wanted him to look into it he could do so.

The group agreed they wanted research on the matter.

**6. Commission Matters**

None

**Adjourn**

11:45am



# Tehama County

## Agenda Request Form

---

**File #:** 26-0172

**Agenda Date:** 2/11/2026

**Agenda #:** 3.

---

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES - October 15th 2025**

#### **Requested Action(s)**

a) Waive the reading and approve the minutes of the regular meeting held 10/15/2025

#### **Financial Impact:**

None

#### **Background Information:**

## Special Meeting



Tehama County  
Wednesday, October 15, 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>

### 8:30 AM

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

The meeting started at 8:46am due to technical difficulties.

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

### Public Comment

A resident discussed a presentation she had seen and shared her thoughts regarding input from Indigenous peoples. She also commented on a previous PRA request she had submitted.

## Special Meeting

### 1. **Potential GSA Fee Structure Presentation** **25-1804**

Jenson commented on the item under discussion, explaining that the purpose was to make a recommendation on the theory of how fees could be charged. He emphasized that the group was not voting to set a fee, recommend a dollar amount, or approve fees at this time. The intent is to reduce the level of work required by consultants during their review. Jenson noted that a formal fee study would be brought back at a later date for final determination after consultant review, and that no fees were being set today.

Jenson reviewed the slideshow and described the proposed fee concepts, noting that when a decision is eventually made, the data available at that time will be used. He also reviewed information regarding total well connections.

A brief recess was taken due to technical difficulties.

The meeting reconvened.

Jenson continued reviewing the presentation, including data on the number of existing wells by type. He discussed the amount of land within the basins, total irrigated acreage, and provided a breakdown by crop type. Jenson explained that the data presented does not align with the Agricultural Commissioner's report and provided clarification on the reasons for the discrepancies.

He continued the presentation by reviewing groundwater use within the basins, including how much groundwater is used and the purposes for which it is used. Additional data related to groundwater conditions in the basins was also presented.

Jenson reviewed the budget portion of the presentation, breaking down each budget category. He noted that budget amounts would vary depending on the selected fee methodology and reiterated staff's recommendations. Jenson stated that he is seeking the top two to three methodologies to forward for further review, highlighting a recommendation to use volumetric measurements as the basis for instituting a fee.

He explained that these measures would help conserve water and reduce groundwater use, which would benefit the basin through a lower overall cost structure and provide incentives for reduced use. Jenson clarified that while the goal is to reduce groundwater volume and associate an incentive with reduced use, the District is not recommending well metering. Instead, staff is recommending an assumptive fee structure with the option for users to report actual groundwater use to reduce costs.

Jenson concluded by stating that he is seeking recommendations on how to move forward and input on what the group would like to see included in the next steps.

Discussion followed regarding how fees would be applied to domestic users.

Lawrence asked about the rationale for charging fees within the basins versus applying them countywide.

Englehardt agreed and proposed recommending that properties outside of the basins

## Special Meeting

be excluded.

Lester agreed with focusing on in-basin properties at this time, suggesting that if groundwater issues arise outside the basins in the future, those areas could be addressed then.

Lawrence asked if anyone had additional thoughts on charging fees outside of the basins.

Merry shared her thoughts on having the discussion and stated that she would like to see the numbers.

Jenson responded that the estimated range for domestic users would be approximately \$2–\$4 per year.

Englehardt suggested excluding domestic users within the basins.

Lawrence asked whether charging fees within the basins was agreeable and if anyone supported a countywide approach. He suggested that if work is conducted by the GSA outside the basins in the future, the issue could be revisited. He stated that there is no plan to do work outside the basins at this time and recommended focusing on a fee structure limited to in-basin properties.

Lester asked whether this action required a motion or could proceed by consensus.

Jenson confirmed that he was seeking consensus at this time to document ideas, with a formal vote to occur at a later date.

Slack added that a caveat should include a five-year review.

Jenson stated that there would always be a five-year review process.

Discussion followed regarding where the fees would apply and whether they would need to be modified.

Lamkin asked whether this applied to all basins.

Jenson clarified that the discussion applied to the five managed subbasins, noting that any basin without an adopted plan would not be included at this time. The subbasins discussed were Bowman, Red Bluff, Corning, Los Molinos, and Antelope.

Lawrence stated that Bowman would be revisited at a later date and that, for now, the evaluation would focus on charging fees within the managed basins only.

### Public Comment

A resident shared their opinion regarding the District's use of funds and existing debt.

## Special Meeting

Lawrence commented that California did not begin managing groundwater until 2014, which has contributed to the current conditions. He stated that groundwater must be managed locally or the State would assume management, which the District is working to avoid.

A resident discussed fluctuations in groundwater levels over the past twenty years and shared their opinion on installing meters on commercial agricultural wells. The resident also suggested higher rates per acre-foot in areas experiencing groundwater depletion.

Jenson responded to the resident's comments, noting that the points raised were valuable input and agreeing that declining groundwater levels result in reduced access to water. He clarified that another Demand Management program includes fees associated with areas experiencing more severe conditions.

A resident asked for the group's perspective on requiring meters on commercial wells.

County Counsel David Klausner responded, stating that a citizen initiative restricts the County from monitoring private wells. He also shared his perspective on well monitoring.

A resident expressed their opinion regarding administrative fees, stating that the only fair way to assess fees would be based on volume of use, including domestic users.

Jenson responded to the resident's comments.

A resident representing the Cattlemen's Association and Farm Bureau stated that cattle producers and walnut growers want to work together to address the issue. They emphasized the importance of ensuring buy-in from both cattlemen and orchardists when the fee structure is determined.

Jenson responded that the District has been able to delay the implementation of fees due to state funding provided through SGMA. He noted that input from the agricultural community will be a significant part of public outreach regarding fees and stated that the overall goal is to reduce costs.

A resident commented that agricultural producers cannot afford to pay the proposed fees and shared concerns related to water use and the cost of electricity.

A resident asked about five-year reporting requirements in the future.

Jenson responded that the grant funding ends in 2026 and does not cover reporting costs in 2026 or in future reporting periods.

The resident continued commenting on Glenn County's portion of the subbasin and referenced a fee report.

A resident from Vina shared their views on the state's requirements and expressed difficulty understanding the connection between the fees being paid and the benefits

## Special Meeting

received. They shared their opinions on well metering, the methodology being considered, and continued discussing taxes and regulations related to the installation of new wells.

Jenson responded that this was the purpose of today's discussion, noting that everyone benefits from groundwater protection. He clarified that neither the GSA nor the District has authority over land use.

A resident shared their opinion on sustainability, noting questions about who is responsible for it. They also expressed their thoughts on metering large water users, emphasizing the importance of fairness while making decisions that benefit the future.

Ward commented that a recurring theme has been the use of meters, noting that it could be left to growers to decide whether to meter.

Lester commented on assumptive use, stating that growers understand the water needs for their crops. He added that he plans to install meters on his agricultural wells and noted that local management of water is preferable, as the county would face greater challenges if the State were to take over management.

Jenson suggested researching "probationary action under SGMA" to see what has occurred in other basins. He noted that, under state conditions, most agricultural operations would likely be unable to afford to farm, and domestic well users would face significantly higher costs than those currently proposed.

Lester commented on areas experiencing the greatest declines in water levels, emphasizing that fees should be structured to disincentivize overuse. He also discussed the number of monitoring wells in these areas that could be used for data comparison and shared his perspective on managing for sustainability.

A resident asked why not all users are required to pay a fee.

Lawrence and Jenson clarified the resident's concerns, and the resident continued to share their opinion.

A resident asked about the law prohibiting well metering.

Lester commented that the County cannot require meters.

Klausner clarified that a citizen initiative passed in the 1980s prevents the County from mandating well meters.

Lawrence asked for discussion among the board.

Godwin commented that the volumetric approach is equitable and shared his view that all users should be part of the program if they benefit. He suggested that incentives should be included to encourage reduced water use and that users who opt to use surface water should be recognized.

## Special Meeting

Crain shared his perspective that all users should contribute, regardless of whether they irrigate. He suggested that cattlemen should pay a small fee, as they also benefit from SGMA. He expressed support for participation from all users who receive benefits, provided his opinion that there is currently insufficient information to set fees. Crain also shared his thoughts on volumetric use and recommended that domestic users contribute at some level.

Englehardt shared his opinion that domestic users within the basins should be charged fees and that non-irrigated landowners within the basins should pay a minimal administrative fee. He expressed support for the concept of consumptive use as an incentive.

Jenson stated that the assumptive-use method is as accurate as they can achieve at this time. He noted that voluntary metering is a good incentive to encourage water savings and commented that the fee structure for non-irrigators still needs to be refined.

Lester shared his opinion, favoring volumetric use with all users in the basin participating. He expressed hesitation regarding a per-acre fee for non-irrigated and dryland farming.

Lawrence stated that everyone should participate and contribute to the fee structure to support management. He expressed support for volumetric measurement but indicated he would like to see additional data before fully discussing it.

Ward shared that he supports volumetric use, with non-irrigated users exempt from fees. He also offered his perspective on differences between low-priority and high priority basins.

Merry agreed with using volumetric measurement and expressed no objection to including all users in the fee structure.

Slack commented that she supports volumetric use, stating that it is the most fair and equitable approach. She noted that almost every GSA that has imposed fees has faced lawsuits and that legal challenges are costly. She expressed that volumetric measurement is the most defensible method.

Lamkin shared that she also favors volumetric use and believes all users should be included. She emphasized the importance of considering water quality, noting that extraction from domestic users could have an impact. She added that administrative costs are low enough to involve everyone, reflecting on her experience with the high costs of data management.

Jenson commented that the proposed numbers are low and his goal is to keep fees as affordable as possible to benefit all users.

Godwin stated that the concept was difficult for him to fully support and shared his concerns about charging residents who already have wells. He noted, however, that he

## Special Meeting

agreed with the volumetric method and appreciated efforts to keep the fee as low as possible. He also commented on the role of municipalities in supplying water and expressed support for Jenson's goal.

Lawrence commented that the discussion has narrowed to two approaches to move forward with volumetric use and a base fee.

Crain suggested considering a distinction between irrigated and non-irrigated parcels, proposing a base fee by parcel with an additional volumetric component.

Lawrence asked whether this fee structure should apply only within the basins or countywide.

Jenson commented that the decision is up to the board and offered to provide additional information if the group wanted to review it.

Discussion followed regarding keeping charges within the five managed basins.

Crain shared his opinion on administrative fees.

Further discussion occurred regarding the Bowman Subbasin.

Lawrence stated that the group has a recommendation to vote on: a volumetric methodology combined with either an initial fee or a per-acre fee, as well as a methodology that applies a flatter fee within the five managed basins.

Jenson reiterated that the vote is to recommend a fee structure report for legal review. The recommendation includes volumetric fees across the board and volumetric fees above administrative costs within the five managed basins. He noted that there are two options for consideration within the five managed basins.

All members were in favor.

## Commission Matters

None

## Adjourn

10:25am



# Tehama County

## Agenda Request Form

---

**File #:** 26-0174

**Agenda Date:** 2/11/2026

**Agenda #:** 4.

---

**Fees Update**

**Requested Action(s)**



# Tehama County

## Agenda Request Form

---

**File #:** 26-0175

**Agenda Date:** 2/11/2026

**Agenda #:** 5.

---

### **Demand Management Update**

#### **Requested Action(s)**

None



# Tehama County

## Agenda Request Form

---

**File #:** 26-0176

**Agenda Date:** 2/11/2026

**Agenda #:** 6.

---

### Outreach Ad Hoc Update

#### Requested Action(s)

None



# Tehama County

## Agenda Request Form

---

**File #:** 26-0178

**Agenda Date:** 2/11/2026

**Agenda #:** 7.

---

### Standing Agenda Items

#### Requested Action(s)

1. Groundwater Recharge
2. Grant Status
3. Demand Management Plan Working Group Update
4. Annual Report Status
5. Outreach