



Tehama County
Monday, December 15, 2025 10:00 AM
Flood Control and Water Conservation
District
Meeting Minutes

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

10:00 AM

Chairperson: Matt Hansen Vice-Chairperson: Vacant
Directors: Greg Jones, Rob Burroughs, Tom Walker

Justin Jenson, Deputy Director of Public Works-Water Resources; Lena Sequeira,
Administration

Call to Order / Pledge of Allegiance / Introductions

10:00AM

Present Vice Chair Matt Hansen, Director Greg Jones, Director Rob
Burroughs, and Director Tom Walker

Public Comment

A resident expressed appreciation for the Groundwater Commission's last meeting and shared their interpretation of the well mitigation program outcomes. They offered their views on recharge and overdraft in the subbasins and commented on fees for residential users. The resident also reviewed some of the presentations from the December public meetings.

A resident presented an article and shared their opinion on its content.

A resident representing DWR updated the group, stating that they have collected as much data as possible on wells within the GSPs across the four subbasins.

A resident reflected on a December public meeting they attended, commenting on grant funding and offering their opinion on the fees needed to run the program.

1. Accept October 2025 and November 2025 GSA Claims 25-2144

Request acceptance of the Tehama County Groundwater Sustainability Agency claims paid from October 2025 through November 2025 in the amount of \$315,510.42.

RESULT: APPROVE

MOVER: Tom Walker

SECONDER: Greg Jones

AYES: Vice Chair Hansen, Director Jones, Director Burroughs, and Director Walker

2. Accept October 2025 - November 2025 Flood Claims 25-2145

Request acceptance of Tehama County Flood Control and Water Conservation District claims paid from October 2025 through November 2025 in the amount of \$72,373.52.

RESULT: APPROVE

MOVER: Greg Jones

SECONDER: Tom Walker

AYES: Vice Chair Hansen, Director Jones, Director Burroughs, and Director Walker

3. Request Authorization to Submit NOE's to Clearing House 25-2152

Jenson explained that the Notice of Exemption (NOE) process is required for state reimbursement and environmental review prior to projects. He described the first NOE for agricultural ASR, using existing water rights for recharge and qualifying as beneficial use under a CEQA exemption.

He discussed a second NOE that is not yet fully defined due to coordination with the Proberta Water District, noting grant timing constraints and the need to secure the NOE to access unused water.

Jenson outlined a third effort with the RCD to improve irrigation efficiency through grant funding.

He also described a fourth effort to install connections for users with existing surface water rights to better utilize available water.

Walker asked about agricultural ASR and raised concerns regarding potential well contamination.

Jenson explained that permitting is handled through the Water Board, which requires routine testing of the injection well and surrounding wells to ensure no contamination. He also described the filtration process involved.

Jones asked why surface water would be diverted into a well for recharge instead of being used directly for irrigation.

Jenson explained that timing is the primary reason, noting that water is recharged when it is available rather than when it is immediately needed for irrigation.

Burroughs raised concerns about taking water during peak periods and injecting it into an already stressed aquifer, asking how over-pressurization would be prevented.

Jenson responded that even at peak conditions, groundwater levels remain below desired levels based on monitoring, and the goal is not to create a new peak but to restore levels.

Burroughs raised concerns related to SGMA, discussing the risk of underground compaction.

Jenson explained that you cannot guarantee that the water injected is exactly what will be pumped out, but AG ASR is as close as you can get. He explained that you would have to have subsidence for what Burroughs is talking about and it is not present in areas where the projects are located.

Hansen stated that he believes water banking is the best approach. Jenson agreed, noting that water banking is the most cost-effective method for recharge if it functions as expected and permission is obtained.

Walker asked whether similar water banking projects are being implemented elsewhere.

Jenson confirmed that water banking is occurring in a few other locations.

Jones asked how quickly the water banking project could be implemented.

Jenson explained that the project's pace is dependent on the Water Board, as their approval is required before moving forward.

Public Comment

A resident expressed appreciation to staff for their work on the project, noting the effort required given the short grant timeline. They also shared their views on overdraft operations and the potential for groundwater recharge.

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| RESULT: | APPROVE |
| MOVER: | Tom Walker |
| SECONDER: | Greg Jones |
| Present | Vice Chair Matt Hansen, Director Greg Jones, Director Rob Burroughs, and Director Tom Walker |

4. Financial Review and Recommendation

25-2151

Jenson explained that grants are reimbursable. The District completes the work, submits invoices to DWR, and is reimbursed for expenses. He noted that for Prop 68 Round Two, \$2.8 million is allocated through two accounting systems, with additional funding from the Board of Supervisors to assist with well mitigation and savings from prior years to cover upfront costs.

He reviewed the latest invoice submitted to DWR for work completed through September 30, noting that reimbursement has not yet been received. Jenson stated that approximately \$2 million needs to be expended by February, but current funds are insufficient. Over \$1 million in reimbursement is pending from DWR, with the largest check expected at year-end, though not guaranteed.

Jenson said auditors want clarity on how this will be managed and raised the possibility of short-term financing through the county to continue work. He explained that without interim funding, consultants may need to pause work until reimbursement is received. He asked the Board to discuss short-term financing options, including potential interest costs, noting that if it works, there is a significant upside.

Walker asked whether any reimbursement claims have been rejected.

Jenson responded that no claims have been rejected, but reimbursements have taken up to seven months to process.

Walker asked whether the grant could cover the short-term financing.

Jenson responded that the grant would not cover the short-term financing, meaning the cost would fall to the District.

The group discussed funding and the reimbursement process.

Jenson noted that the District lacks long-term funding and recommended addressing funding before approving programs, warning that some initiatives may soon move forward without a clear funding source.

Burroughs asked about the expected timeline for reimbursement.

Jenson clarified.

A resident shared their opinion on the well registration plan and the timeline of fees.

Jenson explained that the timeline is still on schedule, but DWR's response in March increased the financial burden. The original plans didn't anticipate grant funding or extra costs, so the District is now handling more than expected.

Hansen shared his opinion that the methodology still needs to be finalized and emphasized the urgency, noting that without it there is no clear path, including for financing. He suggested making a motion to authorize Jenson to consult with the county banker and report the results back to the Board.

Jenson stated that the Board's recommendation on moving forward is already in place. He is seeking authorization to consult with the county banker about short-term funding.

Burroughs disagreed, citing issues with the methodology and a lack of a clear path forward. He shared his opinion that there is insufficient background to proceed.

The group reached consensus to authorize Jenson to consult with the county banker on funding options and report back to the Board for review.

5. Well Mitigation Program

25-2146

Jenson reviewed the well mitigation program, covering its purpose, objectives, and key issues. He explained how short-term water is provided to dry wells, eligibility criteria, and that it is a reimbursement program where owners choose a contractor within a total cost cap. He also outlined next steps, ongoing program development and continued to go over eligibility requirements.

Jones said he isn't opposed to the 40-year cap but questioned whether the District should be responsible when a well fails because of overdraft.

Jenson responded that he will address that issue, noting it was discussed extensively in the Commission.

Jenson explained mitigation measures and well owner responsibilities, including providing temporary drinking water if a well can't be replaced within 10 days. He noted that replacement eligibility requires depressed groundwater, determined using nearby monitoring sites, and reviewed other program requirements and criteria.

Discussion on the program.

Jenson reiterated that the program is scheduled to be in place by January 1, 2026, and that it will take about 180 days afterward to establish the governance structure.

Walker asked about funding for the program, questioning whether a line item would be added to taxes and if it would eventually be suspended.

Jenson explained that any fees collected go into a separate account used only for dry wells and clarified how the funds are managed. He noted the process will be open to the public and may need adjustments in the future.

He shared the Commission's recommendations for the program, including removing the requirement for good standing with Environmental Health, not requiring the class, not depreciating the well hole and casing, depreciating only wearable equipment like pumps and wiring, and setting a 30-day maximum for reimbursement.

Hansen raised concerns about cash flow, asking whether exhausting the account could create problems if many dry wells require reimbursement within 30 days.

Walker confirmed that the 30-day maximum reimbursement depends on having sufficient funds in the account.

The group discussed the reimbursement schedule and potential cash flow issues.

Hansen reviewed each recommended item and requested input from the Board. The Board reached consensus to allow good standing with Environmental Health but include a chance to appeal.

Regarding the class requirement, Burroughs opposed it and explained his reasoning, and the Board agreed that taking the class would not be required.

The Board agreed that no depreciation would apply to the well or casing, noting this recommendation came from the Commission, not the working group. Jenson clarified the reasoning behind it. Depreciation would only apply to hardware, and the 30-day reimbursement limit was confirmed.

A resident expressed concerns about over pumping without fees and questioned the source of funds for well mitigation. They also stated that wells that went dry before the program should be compensated.

A resident expressed that the ordinance should focus on ensuring access to groundwater.

They noted that the Groundwater Commission has made significant progress in this area and shared their opinions on specific program details.

A resident shared their opinion, stating that the process is working well and contrasted it with the development of Demand Management.

A resident shared their opinion on the GSA's responsibility for declining groundwater levels and offered input on various program criteria.

A resident shared appreciation for the GSA's plan, emphasizing the need to move forward on groundwater depletion. They noted well mitigation is a well-thought-out plan and highlighted agriculture's key role.

A resident shared their opinion on the well mitigation program.

A resident asked about funding, specifically whether pumpers would be charged fees to support the program.

Jenson explained that the fee structure includes funding for well mitigation, with most costs covered by agricultural pumpers. He noted that existing programs were reviewed and combined.

Walker asked whether the program would be retroactive.

Jenson stated that the program is not retroactive. He added that application fees would be reimbursed for approved applicants, but not for those who are denied.

Hansen stated that pump contractors will be informed about the program and can direct well owners to the county if a well is dry or lacking equipment. He also noted that wells that went dry before the program cannot be covered.

Jenson clarified.

Hansen asked when the program would go into effect.

Jenson responded that it would take effect as soon as it is put in place.

Walker asked if a well owner currently relying on hauled water (e.g., from a water truck) due to a dry well would be eligible to apply.

Jenson stated that he expects some individuals who previously did not qualify due to income may apply under this program, and that some applicants may have well issues related to casing collapse or equipment failure.

The group discussed potential applicants and estimated how many might apply for the program.

Hansen noted that if a well goes dry, it can be a serious issue for those with animals, and emphasized that people cannot go 10 days without water. He questioned the limits of what the county is willing to do to restore water access.

Jenson explained that the well mitigation program specifically addresses this issue. He noted the plan may tie into existing programs and suggested including language requiring a water tank and delivery by truck if needed.

The group discussed methods for supplementing water for well owners.

Hansen asked if there is an exemption to move water from one parcel to another.

Jenson responded that this Board does not have the authority to grant such an exemption.

The group discussed the rules and limits for moving water between parcels.

A DWR representative stated that the North Valley Small Community Drought Relief Program funds will end next year. They noted that NVCF has good infrastructure for water delivery, but funding will stop. They also asked whether wells in Rancho are being replaced.

Jenson replied to the DWR representative's questions about funding and well replacements.

Hansen asked the Directors if they agreed to modify the criteria concerning the Environmental Health component.

The group agreed to reinstate it with an appeals process and approved the plan incorporating the Groundwater Commission's recommendations.

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| RESULT: | APPROVE |
| MOVER: | Greg Jones |
| SECONDER: | Tom Walker |
| AYES: | Vice Chair Hansen, Director Jones, Director Burroughs, and Director Walker |

Meeting went into Recess

Meeting Reconvened

6. Demand Management Program

25-2147

Jenson asked the Directors if they were ok not reviewing the STRAW proposal.

The Directors agreed it was not necessary.

Jenson gave an overview of the process so far, noting that CBI helped with Demand Management and creating the document. He reviewed background, key outcomes, accomplishments, areas needing more discussion, and survey results.

He explained there are two main items for the Board ideas from the working group that weren't agreed on, and the Farm Bureau's preferred recommendation, along with the Groundwater Commission's recommendation. Jenson requested four months to work with the Commission to finalize structural components and discuss fees, so everything can be considered together

with input from both the Commission and the fee setter.

Walker asked if they were doing away with the Demand Management Working Group.

Jenson replied no, they are still going to meet.

Walker suggested comparing the Farm Bureaus plan.

Jenson explained that there are two different processes on methodology and shared his interpretation, noting that more discussion is needed.

Walker added that while the Farm Bureau plan was good, it would set progress backward.

Jenson said he would have appreciated having this discussion 12 months ago, which is why the Commission wants more time. He supports taking additional time to discuss and come back with more recommendations, suggesting the working group could review ideas before bringing them to the Commission.

Walker emphasized the importance of the working group continuing to meet.

Jenson said they are close to bridging the gap between the working group and the Commission.

Burroughs asked if more time or a specific date is needed.

Jenson replied April.

Hansen shared that, as a GSA and supervisors, they must consider the impacts on all users, both small and large, noting it's a big task to get a plan approved. He emphasized the importance of Farm Bureau approval due to potential litigation, referenced fees in other counties, and stressed maintaining local control. Hansen cautioned that approving the Farm Bureau plan as-is could put the GSA at risk and highlighted the need to protect all stakeholders. He noted that good discussions are happening and believes a viable plan can be developed in the next four months. He acknowledged that Jenson has been tasked with bringing a plan and expressed support for moving forward carefully and correctly.

A resident from the Demand Management Working Group shared their opinion on the timeline and expressed a preference for the Farm Bureau plan.

Hansen clarified.

A resident shared their opinion on probation and completing the assigned task. They discussed the timeline and expressed support for the Farm Bureau's plan.

A resident shared their opinion on the timeline and suggested that both plans could be combined into a strong solution. They also expressed support for the outcomes of the well mitigation program.

A resident, president of the Farm Bureau, noted that staff and Farm Bureau plans are similar and acknowledged that the Groundwater Commission had limited time to review the Farm

Bureau's plan. They shared their opinion on the requested timeline extension and asked that the Farm Bureau plan be considered.

Jones broadly agreed with Hansen, noting that having Farm Bureau approval provides protection from litigation. He said he isn't worried about probation from DWR, supports keeping the four-month timeline, and suggested revisiting it if more time is needed. He encouraged the working group to meet more, believing they will reach consensus.

Walker said he supported giving more time and explained why. He mentioned that they voted against the well moratorium under the condition of getting this done. After reviewing well permits issued in the county, people are not going out and drilling big ag well. If we need more time, then we should do that.

Burroughs suggested tabling the item for six months.

Hansen said building on the Farm Bureau plan is a good idea and noted it reduces the risk of lawsuits if key stakeholders are involved. He supports the four-month timeline with an update at that time and prefers an April deadline for updates.

Walker asked if having the framework of the plan by April would allow enough time to get resolutions in place.

Jenson explained that once the plan is adopted, if an ordinance is required, it will take about six months to implement due to public input and hearings.

Walker asked if it is Jenson's plan to use a water attorney.

Jenson responded that they have already had the document reviewed by a water attorney. He added that they are working on funding to have an attorney present for a few meetings and are trying to make that happen.

The group agreed on extending the timeline to April.

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| RESULT: | APPROVE |
| MOVER: | Greg Jones |
| SECONDER: | Tom Walker |
| AYES: | Vice Chair Hansen, Director Jones, Director Burroughs, and Director Walker |

7. Flood Related Items

25-2148

Jenson stated that he requested state funding for modeling and a floodplain study of the Salt Creek and Mill Creek areas. While there has been no official response, his contact believes the funds are likely available.

He is also working with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to provide detailed modeling, compile a list of watersheds, and seek approval to map these areas. Meetings are scheduled, and the outcome is pending, with hopes for future assistance in modeling to identify potential

projects.

8. Updates

25-2149

Well Mitigation – Covered earlier in meeting

Demand Management – Covered earlier in meeting

Recharge

Jenson stated that securing short-term funding is key to testing how these initiatives will work and will be an important part of the overall plan.

Walker asked how much of Demand Management involves action in lieu.

Jenson answered that the original STRAW proposal continues existing programs. He explained that the biggest challenge for farmers is installing connections for surface water rather than pumping groundwater, and that funding for the program has run out. He noted that if these projects can be funded, the incentivized work can continue.

Hansen reflected on a breakout session he attended at CSAC that reviewed reporting requirements for diverting floodwaters.

Jenson confirmed and said he attends their meetings, providing details about the discussions.

9. Board Matters

They discussed adjusting dates for committees and commissions if needed.

Walker thanked staff for their efforts, and Hansen echoed his appreciation.

Adjourn

1:03PM