



Tehama County
Wednesday, July 9, 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 Call to Order / Pledge of Allegiance / Introductions

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

ABSENT Commissioner Hal Crain, and Commissioner Jeff Godwin

Public Comment None

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES - Clerk & Recorder Lena Sequeira 25-1227

Waive the reading and approve the minutes of the regular meeting held 5/7/2025

RESULT: APPROVE

MOVER: Seth Lawrence

SECONDER: Martha Slack

AYES: Commissioner Hamer, Commissioner Slack, Commissioner Lamkin, Commissioner Ward, Commissioner Lawrence, Commissioner Spannaus, Commissioner Englehardt, Commissioner Lester, and Commissioner Merry

ABSENT: Commissioner Crain, and Commissioner Godwin

4. Presentation on Long Term Funding Strategies

25-1226

Deputy Director Justin Jenson provided a presentation on fee structures. The presentation focused on identifying the methodology the group would recommend to the board for charging extraction fees.

He noted that compliance with the water code is the primary objective. Discussion centered on fee methodology, with emphasis that imposing extraction fees is the most common theme in both regulation and law.

Jenson reminded the group of the state's fee schedule should the state administer the program, along with the associated costs.

Jenson reviewed long-term fee projections, noting they are broad estimates subject to change as discussions continue, but provide a general financial range. He outlined the various options and associated fees. Jenson also highlighted the schedule for placing fees on the tax roll, presenting a step-by-step timeline to meet the July 2026 deadline. It is anticipated that public hearings and a voting process will be required.

Discussion also addressed whether wellhead fees were included in the presentations fee outline.

Jenson stated that certain things must happen regardless of how much water is used in the county.

There was discussion on the need for two different matrixes and the possible necessity to manage extraction outside the basins.

Commissioner Slack asked if these will be classified as a mandated charge.

Jenson responded stating that there are two ways data is collected showing who gets water from municipal and who gets water from groundwater extraction. The decision of how to charge will have to be made and there will be two ways of doing so. The first would be to independently charge on the tax roll. The second would be to charge the municipality then they would charge their customers. There will be a discussion with attorneys before bringing any of that forward.

Commissioner Lamkin stated that this would be a heavy lift of data and customer service, she asked if there was a plan for staffing.

Jenson responded clarifying that part of what we talk about with long term fees includes that staffing portion. There will be more discussion going forward on staff requirements.

There was discussion on well head fees, fees vs use and how often fees should be assessed.

Jenson stated that it would be most beneficial to assess fees every five years.

Commissioner Hamer stated his opinion on the five year window saying that gives us a chance to know what we would be dealing with.

Jenson agreed that it would give a more reasonable forecast of cost.

Hamer asked if all fees would go through the 218 process.

Jenson responded, stating that some most likely will, but not all. Ultimately we will have the fee experts weigh in on that and give advice.

Hamer mentioned that if the fees do go through 218 then the whole process has to be done all over again.

Jenson said that is another reason to have the five year durations.

Englehardt asked if this was the precedent for other GSA's with a similar system

Jenson answered stating that generally yes, this is the type of system exists.

There was discussion on the basic structure as well as fee structures compared to other basins.

There was a request to see examples from other basins and show the structure for insight.

Jenson stated that they will be doing this throughout the entire process. The agencies have different authorities so that will also need to be factored in. He stated that they will choose agencies similar to ours and go over the different details.

Jenson reiterated that what he is looking for is some sort of consensus to review this and move to the next step.

There was discussion on the chart being presented and the fees to be charged.

Commissioner Lester asked how irrigated acres are mapped.

Jenson confirmed that initially we will use what was collected during well registration. Ultimately in the long run if you did not register, you will get charged for an assumptive use. The assumed use will be based on crop type and how much water it takes to water that crop type.

Englehardt asked about Land IQ, this is a program that he is familiar with and it seems to be accurate.

Jenson stated that they want to use Land IQ, but it is pricey. The money needs to be used wisely so if they do go with them, it might be an every five years scenario.

There was discussion on cost relating to Land IQ and the frequency of needing the service.

Hamer commented that part of what it will come down to is land-owner and buy in. If they are willing to cooperate, we will get more legitimate numbers.

Public Comment

A resident stated their opinion on cost versus profit for farmers. They had concerns for their AG wells since they only use them one or two times per year and wanted to know how these fees would affect them.

Commissioner Hamer asked The Commission if they approved the fee schedule.

5. Standing Agenda Items

25-1197

1. Groundwater Recharge

Jenson noted that the topic had been briefly discussed earlier. He stated that it will be important to determine the legal extent of access to water for recharge. Independent counsel has been contracted to conduct a review. The review will address potential sources of water and the rights required to secure and use that water.

2. Grant Status

Eddy Teasdale provided an update on the grant status. He informed the group that the periodic evaluation is due in August 2027, and a determination will need to be made on the path forward. DWR is currently completing another multi-completion well in Los Molinos, which will provide additional data collection opportunities.

Teasdale reviewed the tasks associated with the 2027 periodic evaluation and highlighted the need for a model update. He noted that the Corning Subbasin uses a different model than Tehama, and there is interest in integrating the two. Input will be needed on which model to pursue. A pros-and-cons memo has been prepared and sent to Lisa and Justin for review prior to presentation to the group.

Jenson reported on a meeting he attended at Rolling Hills Casino regarding a planned construction project. The project includes a water feature that could potentially serve as a recharge site in the future. He noted this could be beneficial given existing water issues in the area.

3. Demand Management Plan Working Group Update

Jenson stated that the STRAW proposal was the topic of the last meeting. Time was spent going over that the majority of the meeting and he briefly explained how the outline worked.

There was discussion on timeline for the STRAW proposal and what some specific scenarios might look like.

4. Well Mitigation Plan Working Group Update

Working on getting the first meeting scheduled to get input on the finer details.

5. Annual Report Status

The annual report is completed and they are gathering the data to put into the five year plan while there are still funds in the grant.

6. Outreach

Jenson talked about the presentation he gave in Los Molinos through the cooperative extension. He also touched on that they have been discussing sending out informative flyers that would be something like a questionnaire.

There was discussion on the tech memo related to Demand Management and the use of unused water in the county.

Teasdale talked about a meeting coming up with the RCD to utilize grant dollars for grower outreach to do some pilot testing.

Commission Matters

None

Adjourn

9:33 AM