



AGRICULTURAL WATER ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING

DRAFT MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING
MONDAY, APRIL 6, 2026
1:30 PM

(Paragraph numbers coincide with agenda item numbers)

1. CALL TO ORDER:

A regular meeting of the Santa Clara Valley Water District (Valley Water) Agricultural Water Advisory Committee (AWAC) (Committee) was called to order in the Valley Water Headquarters Building Boardroom at 5700 Almaden Expressway, San Jose, California, and by Zoom teleconference, at 1:30 p.m.

1.1 Roll Call.

Committee members in attendance were District 2 James Provenzano, District 3 Robert Long Jr., Loma Prieta Resource Conservative District Representative Peter Van Dyke, Santa Clara County Farm Bureau Representative Jan Garrod, District 6 and Vice Chairperson Tim Chiala, and District 5 and Chairperson presiding, Trevor Garrod constituting a quorum of the Committee.

Committee members who were not in attendance in person were District 1 Representatives Erin Gil and Mitchell Mariani, and District 4 Representative Brent Bonino.

District 4 Representative Sheila Barry arrived as noted below.

Staff members in attendance were: Chanie Abuye, Jason Araujo, Joshua Golka, Walter Gonzalez, Andy Gschwind, Wendy Ho, Cindy Kao, Bassam Kassab, Patrice McElroy, Nicole Merritt, Carmen Narayanan, Mark Poole, Desiree Sausele, Kirsten Struve, Darin Taylor, Greg Williams, and Jing Wu.

Board Representatives in attendance were: Valley Water Vice Chairperson Richard P. Santos (District 3), Valley Water Director John Varela (District 1), and Valley Water Director Jim Beall (District 4).

Public in attendance were: Valley Water Director Rebecca Eisenberg (District 7), and Katja Irvin (Sierra Club).

2. TIME OPEN FOR PUBLIC COMMENT ON ANY ITEM NOT ON THE AGENDA:

Chairperson Trevor Garrod declared time open for public comment on any item not on the agenda. There was no one present who wished to speak.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

3.1. Approval of January 5, 2026, Agricultural Water Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes.

Recommendation: Approve the minutes.

The Committee considered the attached minutes of the January 5, 2026, Committee meeting.

Peter Van Dyke and Chair Trevor Garrod expressed appreciation for Nicole Merritt's work in preparing the minutes.

Public Comments:
None.

It was moved by Peter Van Dyke and seconded by Jan Garrod and unanimously carried that the minutes be approved.

Sheila Barry arrived.

4. REGULAR AGENDA:

4.1. Review Proposed Fiscal Year (FY) 2026-2027 Groundwater Production Charges and Provide Committee Feedback.

Recommendation: Review proposed FY 2026-2027 Groundwater Production Charges and provide feedback.

Carmen Narayanan reviewed the information on this item, per the attached Committee Agenda Memo, and per the information contained in Attachment 1.

Carmen Narayanan, Darin Taylor, Cindy Kao, Valley Water Vice Chair Santos and Director Varela were available to answer questions.

The Committee discussed the following topics: confirmed the cancellation of the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA) loan for the suspended Pacheco Reservoir Expansion Project and noted that no associated grant funding received will be required to be repaid; discussed how Valley Water works with the water retailers through sharing rate projections and seeking feedback on water use assumptions and noted

retailer rates cannot be controlled by Valley Water as the wholesaler; expressed concern regarding the agriculture rate compared to the residential rate in Zone W-2; discussed the basis for the increases to the capital cost recovery rate and open space credit projections noted on Pages 6 and Page 14 of Attachment 1; discussed how certain allocated energy costs may contribute to the water rates and how those costs vary by zone based on the number of treatment plants, imported water supplies, and recharge or recycled water activities; expressed interest in the renewable energy sources used at the water treatment plants; noted staff are monitoring the lower snow pack levels and reviewed the annual rate setting cycle and the contingencies in place including the Drought Contingency Reserve, Rate Stabilization Reserve, and the Supplemental Water Supply Reserve; noted staff do not anticipate a substantial rate increase beyond what is budgeted for the imported water supply; noted the Valley Water Board is working to keep a lower cost structure; expressed support for staff's level of details in the report; and discussed the challenges facing agriculture associated with rising utility costs, infrastructure costs, and county fines.

The Committee received and noted the information, provided feedback, and took no formal action.

4.2. Receive Update on Valley Water's Periodic Evaluation to its Alternative Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) under the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA).

Recommendation: Receive an update on Valley Water's periodic evaluation to its Alternative GSP under SGMA.

Chanie Abuye reviewed the information on this item, per the attached Committee Agenda, and per the information contained in Attachment 1.

Chanie Abuye and Greg Williams were available to answer questions.

The Committee discussed the following topics: expressed support for Valley Water's groundwater management efforts; discussed staffing resources and budget; discussed San Benito County Water District's GSP and noted Frazier Lake is included; and noted staff continue to manage the water quality and levels in the North San Benito Subbasin, which is in healthy condition.

Public Comments:
None.

The Committee received and noted the information, provided feedback, and took no formal action.

4.3. Receive an Update on Valley Water's South County Managed Aquifer Recharge Activities.

Recommendation: Receive an update on Valley Water's South County managed aquifer recharge activities.

Bassam Kassab reviewed the information on this item, per the attached Committee Agenda, and corresponding presentation materials contained in Attachment 3 were reviewed as follows: Bassam Kassab reviewed Slides 1-7 and Chanie Abuye reviewed Slides 8-9.

Bassam Kassab, Chanie Abuye, Jing Wu, and Desiree Sausele were available to answer questions.

Public Comments:
None.

The Committee discussed the following topics: reviewed groundwater conditions and water table levels at Laguna Seca; noted that proposed sewer service developments near San Pedro Ponds may require approval through Local Agency Formation of Santa Clara County (LAFCO); discussed natural groundwater recharge from rainfall and associated extraction charges; discussed the Madrone Channel Expansion and expressed support for continued planning of future groundwater recharge and percolation projects to enhance long-term water supply reliability; discussed feasibility of Flood-MAR; and the injection well process.

Public Comments:
None.

The Committee received and noted the information, provided feedback, and took no formal action.

4.4. Review 2026 Agricultural Water Advisory Committee (AWAC) Work Plan, the Outcomes of Board Action of Committee Requests, and the Committee's Next Meeting Agenda.

Recommendation: Review the Committee work plan to guide the committee's discussions regarding policy alternatives and implications for Board deliberation.

The Committee considered this item without a staff presentation.

Nicole Merritt, Kirsten Struve, Chanie Abuye, and Valley Water Director Beall were available to answer questions.

Public Comments:
None.

The Committee discussed the following topics: expressed interest in quantifying agriculture's contribution to groundwater recharge; noted agricultural water use is highly efficient and that most water is returned to crops, based on the previous study presented to AWAC; discussed required measures implemented through open space stormwater permits

and the agricultural challenges associated with regulatory agencies; discussed soil conditions affecting percolation and associated potential credits and cost savings and expressed support for a map identifying priority areas.

The Committee expressed the following details regarding the AWAC Work Plan:

Add to Work Plan:

The Committee expressed support for adding language to the following Work Plan item: *Update on Valley Water's South County Managed Aquifer Recharge Activities.*

It was moved by Peter Van Dyke and seconded by Jan Garrod and unanimously approved to amend the Work Plan to include the following goal language:

Update on Valley Water's South County Managed Aquifer Recharge Activities:

- Goal to determine – regions preferred feasible for percolation in collaboration with Valley Water & landowners for mutual benefit.

Chairperson Trevor Garrod moved the Agenda to Item 6.1.

6. REPORTS:

6.1. Government Affairs Report

Josh Golka provided the federal and state verbal update.

6.2. Director's Report

Valley Water Director Varela invited the AWAC members to attend the San Luis Delta-Mendota Water Authority Board of Directors meetings.

Valley Water Vice Chairperson Santos highlighted the Joint Water Resources Committee – Cities of Gilroy and Morgan Hill April 4, 2026, meeting and expressed support for continued outreach to local legislators.

Valley Water Director Beall noted a recent visit to the Semitropic Water Storage District and discussed the WIFIA loan program.

6.3. Manager's Report

Darin Taylor confirmed no further information.

6.4. Committee Member Report

Vice Chairperson Tim Chiala shared invitation to the Santa Clara County Farm Bureau's golf tournament on April 23, 2026.

6.5. Information Link:

Links noted on agenda.

Chairperson Trevor Garrod returned the Agenda to Item 5.

5. CLERK REVIEW AND CLARIFICATION OF COMMITTEE REQUESTS:

This is an opportunity for the Clerk to review and obtain clarification on any formally moved, seconded, and approved requests and recommendations made by the Committee during the meeting.

Nicole Merritt confirmed no requests to speak were received from the public on all agenda items; the Committee reviewed and discussed the proposed FY 2026-2027 Groundwater Production Charges and expressed interest in the renewable energy sources under Item 4.1; received and noted the update on Valley Water's periodic evaluation to its alternative GSP under SGMA and expressed support for staff's work under Item 4.2; received and noted the update on Valley Water's South County's managed aquifer recharge activities under Item 4.3; and approved to amend the Work Plan to include the goal language under the *Valley Water's South County Managed Aquifer Recharge Activities*: to determine – regions preferred feasible for percolation in collaboration with Valley Water & landowners for mutual benefit under Item 4.4.

7. ADJOURN:

- 7.1. Adjourn. The Next Regular Meeting is Scheduled at 1:30 p.m. on July 6, 2026.

Chairperson Trevor Garrod adjourned the meeting at 3:37 p.m. The next regular meeting is scheduled to occur at 1:30 p.m. on July 6, 2026.

Date approved:

Nicole Merritt
Deputy Clerk
(Committee Meetings)