

# About the Fee Study

The fee study is working to determine a fee structure that meets the following two goals:

- Establish a fair fee structure that the GSA board of directors can adopt.
- Secure a fee structure adopted with maximum buy-in from interested parties and community-at-large.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **I received my property tax bill and I disagree with the number of acres the fee is calculated on. How was the acreage determined and how can I reduce the number of acres?**

If your property is classified by the Monterey County Assessor as agricultural land in the categories 4C, 4D, 4F, 4G, 4K or 4N and it is located within the SVBGSA management area, the SVBGSA regulatory fee applies to your property. The number of acres upon which the fee is calculated was determined using mapping software. This acreage figure may not be the same as the parcel acreage stated on your property tax bill because the mapping software may not have determined the acreage to be exactly the same as that of the legal description or map provided to the Monterey County Assessor.

If you disagree with the acreage upon which the fee is calculated and believe that it should be reduced, you must first pay the fee and then appeal it no later than thirty (30) days following payment of the fee. The GSA fee appeal form is located on the SVBGSA website ([svbgsa.org](http://svbgsa.org)).

### **I intend to appeal the calculation upon which the SVBGSA regulatory fee for my property has been determined. What supporting documents must I provide?**

Supporting documentation needs will differ depending upon the grounds for appeal. You should provide everything that you believe supports your reason to reduce the fee. In all cases however, a map of the property with the fee that is being appealed will be very helpful. The appeal is reviewed by the SVBGSA General Manager who will request additional information if necessary.

### **Why is the SVBGSA regulatory fee for my property calculated based on total acreage of the property and not just the acres that are currently being irrigated?**

The fee is applied to properties within the SVBGSA management area classified by the Monterey County Assessor as agricultural land in the categories 4C, 4D, 4F, 4G, 4K or 4N. The entire acreage of the parcel is included in the fee calculation on the basis that whether or not the land is currently physically irrigated or not, it has the potential to be irrigated. Land can only be excluded from the fee calculation if it is physically impossible to ever irrigate the acreage. Agricultural land with structures located on it is included in the fee.

## **What is the Salinas Valley Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency?**

The Salinas Valley Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency (SVBGSA) was formed in 2017 to address the statewide mandate of measuring and securing future groundwater supplies. As part of its mandate under Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA), the SVBGSA is in the process of developing Groundwater Sustainability Plans (GSPs) for the Salinas Valley Basin.

## **What is Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA)?**

[SGMA](#) requires that certain groundwater basins form GSAs to manage groundwater supplies and develop groundwater management plan(s) to meet future sustainability requirements.

## **What is the timing for the Groundwater Sustainability Plan?**

The Department of Water Resources (DWR) has designated some portions of the Salinas Valley Basin as critically over-drafted. These areas must have a Groundwater Sustainability Plans (GSPs) in place by January 2020. Other portions of the Salinas Valley Basin must have plans in place by January 2022.

## **Is the SVBGSA part of Monterey County Water Resources?**

No. The SVBGSA is a completely separate entity with its own Board of Directors.

## **Why is the SVBGSA conducting a fee study?**

The SVBGSA must have a funding mechanism in place prior to July 1, 2019 to pay for SVBGSA's regulatory activities, which include day-to-day operations, development of the GSP, and prudent reserves. The goal of the study is to determine a reasonable, fair fee that the SVBGSA can adopt.

## **What is the annual operating budget of the GSA?**

The current annual budget for the SVB is approximately \$1.15 million. These costs cover contract personnel, legal services, consultant services (development of the GSP, grant writing, facilitation, communications, financial services), office rent and related supplies costs, dues and insurance, and other related operations costs.

## **What are the consequences if the SVBGSA does not set a fee?**

If a permanent fee is not in place to self-fund by July 1, 2019, the SVBGSA will dissolve. The Department of Water Resources will declare the basins in the Salinas Valley Basin "probationary" and will impose its own fee structure, which will be much costlier, out of local control, and not a desirable outcome.

## **How will the fee be determined?**

The Fee Study is looking at several factors in determining possible funding options and will consider the unique needs of the communities within the subbasins during the development of the fee.

Fee options include regulatory user fees, property related (non-regulatory) user fees and special taxes.

## **How much will the fee be?**

There are several fee structures being explored, all of which result in different fee amounts. Wellhead charges, parcel charges and extraction charges are options being considered.

## **How will I pay the fee?**

There are several ways the fee may be paid for depending on the fee structure established. A couple of examples include adding the fee to property tax bills or separate billing from the SVBGSA.

## **When will the fee take effect?**

The goal is to have a fee recommendation complete in Fall 2018 with SVBGSA Board adoption in Spring 2019. The fee would be charged starting July 1, 2019.

## **How is the SVBGSA's Board accountable to the public regarding expenditures?**

The SVBGSA is an agency formed under California's Joint Powers Act. As such, it is subject to the same budget overview and public accountability as all other agencies in California. Financial documents are posted on the SVBGSA website.

## **Will the fees collected be used for specific projects?**

The fee that will be implemented in July 2019 will NOT be used to fund infrastructure or resources projects. This fee will only fund regulatory activities (such as GSP development), including administration and prudent reserves.

## **How can I get involved?**

Community workshops will be held in fall 2018. For questions, email [GSAfeestudy@svbgsa.org](mailto:GSAfeestudy@svbgsa.org).