



June 12, 2021

Advisory Committee,
Salinas Valley Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency
P.O. Box 1385
Carmel Valley, CA 93984

**RE: SVBGSA Advisory Committee Meeting 7/15/2021, Agenda Item 4.c
Pumping from New Wells in the Deep Aquifers**

Dear Advisory Committee Members:

Monterey County Farm Bureau fully supports the initiation and development of the Deep Aquifer Study, as proposed by the Salinas Valley Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency (SVBGSA), discussed and debated in prior meetings with both the SVBGSA Advisory Committee and the SVBGSA Board of Directors.

While we support this critical study to determine the extent, quantity, and hydrology of the deep aquifer layer of the Salinas Valley groundwater basin, it cannot go unrecognized that this water resource is the only available water to some of the beneficial uses in the Pressure (180/400) sub-basin. This includes both municipal and domestic uses, as well as agricultural irrigation.

Without any other water resource currently available to supply beneficial uses when an existing well is deemed unusable due to salinity, constituents, or structure failure, a prohibition on all new replacement wells would trample existing water rights and jeopardize the ability to continue supplies for both municipal water purveyors and farming operations.

There has been much discussion on how to optimize and expand the Castroville Seawater Intrusion Project to deliver more surface water supplies to the farming operations of the coastal zone area, but until that project is funded, built and operational, there is no additional water that can supply this area when a failed well occurs.

Therefore, we urge that there be an allowance for wells into the deep aquifer as replacements for any failed existing, formerly operational well in the aquifer layers above this resource. Denying access to water-related property rights, regardless of beneficial use, is not consistent with current California law. Additionally, the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act specifically states that current water rights cannot be trampled by a management practice.

Therefore, Monterey County Farm Bureau urges the SVBGSA Advisory Committee to not make any recommendation to the Board of Directors that includes a prohibition on new wells in the deep aquifers of the Salinas Valley groundwater basin. The proposed study will provide insight into how this water resource can and should be managed, but until that study's final report is realized, water rights must take precedence over any other action.

Sincerely,



Norman C. Groot
Executive Director

Grower-Shipper Association of Central California
ADVANCING FAMILIES, FOOD AND FARMING ON THE CENTRAL COAST



**512 Pajaro Street
Salinas, CA 93901
Phone: (831) 422-8844
Fax: (831) 422-0868**

Via Email

June 14, 2021

SVBGSA Advisory Committee
P.O. Box 1385
Carmel Valley, CA 93984

Re: Agenda Item 4.c, Pumping from New Wells in the Deep Aquifers

Dear Advisory Committee,

The above-referenced agenda item and LandWatch's request dated July 13, 2021 for a recommendation on enacting an immediate pumping moratorium on new Deep Aquifer wells, presumably before and/or while the proposed Deep Aquifer study gets underway, appears to solely call upon merely one, out of many, authorities granted to groundwater sustainability agencies while overlooking SGMA's many charges which include empowering and directing local groundwater agencies to conduct studies to support informed decisions on avoiding undesirable results and mitigating overdraft over a long-term horizon. Investigation, or studying, groundwater conditions is necessary in order to support sustainable groundwater management over the planning and implementation horizon.

We believe it's imperative that the Salinas Valley Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency utilizes the flexibility granted through SGMA to analyze overdraft challenges while pursuing protection and water supply availability goals, as is consistent with the local groundwater sustainability plan.

SGMA is clear in its requirement that an agency shall assess "...conditions in the basin that may warrant modification of the plan or management objectives, and may adjust components in the plan;" CA Water Code § 10728.2 (2020).

We hope the Committee agrees that the moratorium-based request before it is, at this time, a premature desire in light of the agency's responsibility to study and assess groundwater conditions that can support future management considerations over the planning and implementation horizon.

Regards,

Christopher Valadez
President, Grower-Shipper Association of Central California

July 13, 2021

Via e-mail

Members of the Advisory Committee
Salinas Valley Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency
P.O. Box 1350
Carmel Valley, CA 93924

Re: Moratorium on new Deep Aquifer pumping pending completion of study

Dear Members of the Advisory Committee:

As explained in our recent letters, the Advisory Committee should recommend that the Salinas Valley Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency (SVBGSA) enact a pumping moratorium on new Deep Aquifer wells permitted after July 1, 2021 in the 180/400-Foot Aquifer Subbasin pending completion of the proposed Deep Aquifer study.

I write to respond to a June 12, 2021 letter from the Farm Bureau that suggests that the Advisory Committee not make such a recommendation, arguing that “[d]enying access to water-related property rights, regardless of beneficial use, is not consistent with current California law.” (Norman Groot, Farm Bureau, letter to Advisory Committee, June 12, 2021.) The letter argues that, until the Deep Aquifer study has been concluded “water rights must take precedence of any other action.” (*Id.*)

The Farm Bureau’s brief letter with no analysis does not explain why the GSA cannot act within SGMA to regulate Deep Aquifer pumping by imposing a moratorium on new wells for a period of time. However, the Farm Bureau’s categorical claim that a pumping moratorium must be inconsistent with California law is not accurate.

SGMA *expressly* permits regulation of groundwater pumping, including new well moratoriums. As the 180/400-Foot Aquifer Subbasin GSP acknowledges in connection with the proposed Deep Aquifer moratorium, SGMA provides GSA with the authority to “regulate groundwater extraction,” including “regulating, limiting, or suspending extractions from individual groundwater wells or extractions from groundwater wells in the aggregate, construction of new groundwater wells, enlargement of existing groundwater wells, or reactivation of abandoned groundwater wells, or otherwise establishing groundwater extraction allocations.” (California Water Code §10726.4 (a)(2); see 180/400-Foot Aquifer Subbasin GSP, p. 9-20.)

SGMA does not purport to alter groundwater rights. Thus, any “limitation on extractions by a groundwater sustainability agency shall not be construed to be a final

determination of rights to extract groundwater from the basin or any portion of the basin.” (Water Code, § 10724.4(a)(2).)

The regulation of groundwater use under SGMA must be harmonized with California’s common law of groundwater rights, but that is not an impossible task:

There are considerable measures GSAs can take to manage their litigation risk and enhance the durability of their GSPs, including making groundwater allocations in their GSPs consistent with the principles of water rights and seeking consensus among affected stakeholders.¹

Water law experts have examined the interplay of SGMA and water rights and identified means by which SGMA can be harmonized with the common law: “SGMA is consistent with the common law, and by following its requirements GSAs are unlikely to violate water rights.”² Water law experts have identified a number of specific ways to regulate extractions in order to minimize legal challenges to the GSA.³

These experts have acknowledged that regulation of pumping is an essential tool for GSAs that cannot be avoided. Thus, they have emphasized the value of clear explanations, fact-specific analysis, and compromise among affected users.⁴

As we have discussed, allocations of authorized groundwater pumping will no doubt be an essential tool to achieve sustainable management in many basins. Groundwater allocations will, in turn, implicate the law of water rights. This area of law is complex, fact-dependent, and sometimes subject to ambiguous and even conflicting precedent. GSAs cannot avoid the legal risks and uncertainty that water rights introduce. They should seek to thoroughly understand the diversity of legal principles that apply to the specific facts at hand and discuss and educate stakeholders on applicable law. Perhaps, most importantly, they should encourage and facilitate broad dialogue to explore opportunities for compromise approaches to allocations that generally reflect water law principles. Such efforts will ideally achieve consensus and avoid legal challenges. If certain issues must be litigated, these efforts may reduce the breadth of opposition, thereby expediting the process and best situate the GSA’s allocation program to sustain a legal challenge on the merits

The need for critical regulation, harmonized with groundwater rights, cannot be summarily dismissed without factual analysis through a categorical claim that any

¹ Garner et al., *The Sustainable Groundwater Management Act and the Common Law of Groundwater Rights—Finding a Consistent Path Forward for Groundwater Allocation*, 2020, UCLA Journal of Environmental Law and Policy, Vol. 38:2, pp. 163 et seq, available at <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/3368r414>

² *Id.*, p. 181.

³ *Id.*, pp. 201-206.

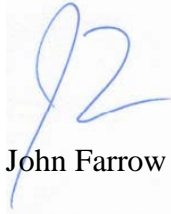
⁴ *Id.*, p. 215.

pumping reductions are “not consistent with current California law.” The GSA should recognize that pumping restrictions are an essential and legitimate tool for addressing groundwater sustainability.

If there are specific objections and arguments as to why the proposed moratorium would violate water rights, then these should be put forward so they can be addressed, perhaps by some other form of shared sacrifice. LandWatch urges the Advisory Committee to seek the advice of its own legal counsel as to *how*, *not whether* to regulate Deep Aquifer extractions to fulfill the intent of Priority Management Action Number 5.

Yours sincerely,

M. R. WOLFE & ASSOCIATES, P.C.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'JF' or 'John Farrow', is written over a light blue rectangular background.

John Farrow

JHF:hs

Cc: SVBGSA Board of Director, board@svbgsa.org
Donna Meyers, meyersd@svbgsa.org
Gary Petersen, peterseng@svbgsa.org
Les Girard, GirardLJ@co.monterey.ca.us

Members of the Advisory Committee
Salinas Valley Basin Ground Water Committee

I am requesting that agenda item 4.c be removed from the agenda of the July 17, 2021 Advisory Committee meeting. The limiting or restricting of the use of any wells within the Salinas Valley Ground Water Basin is not within the scope of responsibility of the Advisory Committee. The letter submitted by the LandWatch legal representative contained the wording concerning litigation risk, legal challenges, legal risks, and issues that must be litigated. This indicates risk of litigation for the Advisory Committee as a whole and Advisory Committee members individually. These legal liability concerns are the reasons I am requesting that agenda item 4.c be removed from the next meeting's agenda.

Respectfully submitted

Mark McLaughlin
SVBGSA Committee Member



July 14, 2021

Advisory Committee,
Salinas Valley Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency
P.O. Box 1385
Carmel Valley, CA 93984

RE: SVBGSA Advisory Committee Meeting 7/15/2021, Agenda Item 4.c Pumping
from New Wells in the Deep Aquifers

Dear Advisory Committee Members,

I am writing on behalf of the Monterey County Vintners & Growers Association (MCVGA), representing the vineyards and wineries growing and making wine from our 44,000 cultivated acres of wine grapes.

The MCVGA:

1. Appreciates the extensive community involvement in developing the Sustainable Groundwater Management Plan in Monterey County.
2. Supports the initiation and development of the deep aquifer study as proposed by the Salinas Valley Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency so that all decisions will be informed by data.
3. Rejects any pumping moratorium on Deep Aquifer Wells until the completion of the proposed Deep Aquifer Study.

WATER CONSERVATION IN WINE GRAPE GROWING

The wine industry in Monterey County and throughout California actively practices water conservation. Most Monterey County wine grape growers are 100% certified sustainable. Water conservation is a large part of these sustainability programs. Monterey County winegrowers have been leaders in developing these sustainability programs and in applying conservation and drip irrigation to their vineyards. To the extent that wine grapes use groundwater, we conserve water and use it wisely.

In addition to conserving water for our community and future generations, it is also a key element in growing quality grapes. The deliberate creation of water stress in grape

vines by limiting water has become a preferred method for restricting canopy growth to benefit fruit quality. The industry practice for regulating and limiting the application of irrigated water below fully watered is called Regulated Deficit Irrigation (RDI). Hence, the local wine industry has multiple reasons for implementing our water conservation practices.

RECOMMENDATION

The Monterey County Vintners and Growers Association urges the SVBGSA Advisory Committee NOT to recommend any prohibition or restriction of pumping from new (or existing) wells in the deep aquifers of the Salinas Valley groundwater basin. We have a plan in place to study the impact. Follow that plan. Then responsibly make data informed decisions in developing the water resource management plan. Until then, water rights must take precedence over any other action.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kim Stemler". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "K" and a stylized "S".

Kim Stemler
Executive Director,
Monterey County Vintners and Growers Association

Dear Members of the Advisory Committee:

The Advisory Committee should recommend that the Salinas Valley Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency (SVBGSA) enact a pumping moratorium on new Deep Aquifer wells permitted after July 1, 2021 in the 180/400-Foot Aquifer Subbasin pending completion of the proposed Deep Aquifer study. The reasons for this proposal are set out in LandWatch's June 9, 2021 letter to the SVBGSA Board of Directors, which is Exhibit 1 to our attached July 8, 2021 letter.

Despite Monterey County Water Resources Agency's (MCWRA's) 2017 and 2020 recommendations for a moratorium on new Deep Aquifer wells, pumping from the Deep Aquifers has accelerated dramatically. Pumping in 2019 reached 10,347 AFY, despite the findings in the 2003 WRIME study that pumping even 4,000 AFY would aggravate seawater intrusion in the overlying aquifers and potentially contaminate the Deep Aquifers themselves. Groundwater levels in the Deep Aquifers have in fact fallen substantially since 2014, increasing the downward hydraulic gradient between the Deep Aquifers and the 400-Foot Aquifer and inducing vertical migration of impaired groundwater.

LandWatch believes that Priority Management Action Number 5 in the 180/400-Foot Aquifer Subbasin Groundwater Sustainability Plan (180/400 GSP) requires that the GSA take action. Priority Management Action Number 5 provides categorically that new Deep Aquifer pumping will not be allowed until the study is completed:

SVBGSA will support extension of Ordinance 5302 immediately. *Deep Aquifers pumping will only be allowed after MCWRA completes its study of the Deep Aquifers' sustainable yield.*

(180/400 GSP, p. 9-20, emphasis added.) The 180/400 GSP explains that the GSA itself has the authority to halt extractions from the Deep Aquifer, citing California Water Code §10726.4 (a)(2). (*Id.* at 9-20.)

SGMA requires that a GSP “*shall* include a description of the projects and management actions the Agency has determined will achieve the sustainability goal for the basins.” (23 CCR § 354.44(a), emphasis added.) The management actions must be described in detail and must be “supported by best available information and best available science.” (23 CCR § 354.44(b), (c).) Here, the 180/400 GSP identifies specific measurable objectives and expected benefits from Priority Management Action Number 5, including reduced seawater intrusion, reduced vertical migration of contaminants, attainment of groundwater storage objectives, and avoidance of unreasonable groundwater elevations. (180/400 GSP, pp. 9-19 to 9-20.)

Management actions are not just a paper exercise. The GSA must actually implement the management actions that the GSP identifies as necessary to sustainability. The GSA must periodically evaluate “whether the actions under the plan are meeting the plan’s management objectives and whether those objectives are meeting the sustainability goal in the basin.” (Water Code, § 10728.2.) DWR must also find that the

GSA is actually implementing its projects and management actions. (23 CCR § 355.6(c)(2).)

Despite this, the GSA's legal counsel has argued the GSA has no "independent duty" to restrict pumping in the Deep Aquifers, despite the County's failure to take the very action on which the GSP's conclusions were predicated. (Les Girard, memorandum to SVBGSA Board of Directors, June 30, 2021, p. 2.) Mr. Girard argues that the GSP assumed that the *County* would impose the necessary moratorium and that "there is nothing in the text indicating that the SVBGSA will impose its own moratorium or extraction limitations, only that the SVBGSA will support a further moratorium imposed by the County of Monterey." (*Id.*)

This strained and formalistic reading of the GSP ignores the substantive basis of the GSP's sustainability conclusions, which is that *no new pumping from the Deep Aquifers will be allowed until the study is completed*. The GSA cannot reasonably find that the "actions under the plan are meeting the plan's management objectives" (Water Code, § 10728.2) if those actions have been aborted by a third party's failure to act. The GSA should use its authority and accept its duty to take the action necessary to meet the GSP's stated objectives and to obtain its express benefits.

Sincerely,

Michael D. DeLapa
Executive Director



Salinas Basin Water Alliance

"Preserve and Protect Salinas Valley Water"

July 14, 2021

Members

Bengard Ranch
Boutonnet Farms
Louie Calcagno
Christensen &
Giannini
Cooper Land Corp.
D'Arrigo Bros.
Dole Fresh
Vegetables
Fontes Farms
General Farm
Investment
Higashi Farms
Huntington Farms
Lanini Family
Merrill Farms
Norcal Harvesting
Nunes Vegetables
Ocean Mist Farms
Panziera Ranches
Pedrazzi Farms
Queen Victoria
Farms
R.C. Farms
Secondo Farms
Scattini Family LP
Springfield Farms
Sunberry Growers
Sunset Farms
Tanimura & Antle
The Tottino Group

**VIA E-MAIL TO MEYERSD@SVBGSA.ORG; TREGENZA@SVBGSA.ORG;
CAMELA@SVBGSA.ORG**

Advisory Committee
Salinas Valley Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency
c/o Donna Meyers
General Manager
P.O. Box 1350
Carmel Valley, CA 93924

**Re: July 15, 2021 Meeting Agenda Item No. 4.c re. Pumping From New Wells In
The Deep Aquifer Of The 180/400-Foot Subbasin**

Dear Advisory Committee Members:

I write on behalf of the Salinas Basin Water Alliance ("Alliance"), a California nonprofit mutual benefit corporation formed to preserve the viability of the County's agricultural community in the Salinas Valley.

This letter concerns Item No. 4.c on the Advisory Committee to the Salinas Valley Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency's ("GSA") meeting agenda, relating to "pumping from new wells in the Deep Aquifer of the 180/400-foot Subbasin." Specifically, the staff report for the item "recommends" that the Committee "consider recommendation to the Board of Directors on pumping from new wells in the Deep Aquifer or other recommendation."

The Alliance's understanding is that GSA staff has agendized this item at the request of the Advisory Committee, but that no specific proposal or action regarding production from the Deep Aquifer is proposed by staff, and therefore no proposal or action is ripe for consideration.

In the event that this is not the case, the Alliance vehemently objects to the Advisory Committee's consideration of any specific action or regulation concerning production from the Deep Aquifer. Any such action would require, among other things, completion of the Deep Aquifer study and development of the technical foundation for any proposed action, a defined proposal, careful staff consideration and outreach with interested stakeholders, the preparation of a draft regulation, compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act, and an opportunity for public review and comment.

Because none of this has taken place, the Advisory Committee should not and cannot make any specific recommendation to the GSA Board of Directors at this time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "George Fontes". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "George" and last name "Fontes" clearly distinguishable.

George Fontes
President, Salinas Basin Water Alliance

Salinas Basin Water Alliance members represent more than 80,000 irrigated acres throughout the Salinas Valley and rely on the Salinas Valley Groundwater Basin for their livelihood and success. The Alliance is working to protect sustainable water rights and equitable water supply throughout the Salinas Valley for the long-term.

Salinas Valley Water Coalition

33 El Camino Real • Greenfield, CA 93927
(831) 674-3783 • FAX (831) 674-3835



TRANSMITTED VIA EMAIL

Salinas Valley Groundwater Sustainability Agency
Advisory Committee

14 July, 2021

Re: SVBGSA Advisory Committee Agency Item 4.c, Pumping from New Wells in the Deep Aquifer of the 180/400 foot Subbasin

Dear Committee Members;

The Salinas Valley Water Coalition (Coalition) believes the initiation and completion of the Deep Aquifer Study for the 180/400 ft Subbasin is critical for informing Monterey County, Monterey County Water Resources Agency and the SVBGSA. It is needed to assist in developing reasonable management actions and/or projects to allow agriculture within the 180/400 ft Subbasin and the Salinas Valley to continue to thrive in a sustainable manner. For those reasons, the Coalition recommends an immediate initiation of the Study.

To this end, the Coalition has offered a commitment to collect from its members and others Seventy-Five Thousand Dollars (\$75,000.00) to contribute to the SVBGSA to help fund one-half of the agricultural contribution for the Deep Aquifer Study and to avoid any fee imposed on landowners of the Upper Valley and Forebay subbasins. The Coalition supports the Study and believes the recommendation made by your Executive Committee would fulfill the funding needs of the Study.

As your Counsel states in his July 9, 2021 memorandum, the SVBGSA does have authority under SGMA to enact extraction limitations. The SVBGSA's 180/400 ft Aquifer GSP Priority Management Action supports an extension of Ordinance 5302 -- that pumping in the Deep Aquifers would only be allowed after MCWRA completes its Study. The Coalition has commented that it supports this action in its prior comments made to the SVBSGA. Through this letter, we would like to clarify that statement.

The Coalition supports the gathering of additional information pertaining to the hydrogeological conditions of the deep aquifer of the 180/400 ft. Subbasin. Monterey County and Monterey County Water Resources Agency have failed to extend Ordinance 5302 and further, they have failed to move forward with the Deep Aquifer Study. We commend and support the SVBGSA for its willingness to take a lead in moving this Study forward and have bolstered our support by offering financial contribution to help fund the Study.

Mission Statement: The water resources of the Salinas River Basin should be managed properly in a manner that promotes fairness and equity to all landowners within the basin. The management of these resources should have a scientific basis, comply with all laws and regulations, and promote the accountability of the governing agencies.

In summary, the Coalition recommends that the SVBGSA take action immediately to begin the Deep Aquifer Study.

Thank you for your consideration of the foregoing comments.

Sincerely,

Nancy Isakson
Nancy Isakson, President

Keith Roberts, Chair

Roger Moitoso, Vice- Chair

Rodney Braga, Director

Lawrence Hinkle, Director

Bill Lipe, Director

David Gill, Director

Steve McIntyre, Director

Brad Rice, Director

Jerry Rava, Director

Grant Cremers, Director

Allan Panziera, Director

Michael Griva, Past-Chair

MEMORANDUM

To:	Salinas Valley Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency on behalf of the Salinas Valley Water Coalition	Date:	July 14, 2021
Cc:	Ms. Nancy Isakson, SVWC Ms. Pam Silkwood, Horan Lloyd Law Firm	Project:	Salinas Valley Water Coalition
FROM:	Dwight Smith, PG, CHg, Principal Hydrogeologist	Project No:	HLLF001
SUBJECT:	Upper Valley Water Budget Review in Draft GSP		

Concern: *The SVBGSA is not using the best available science for establishing water balances of the Forebay and Upper Valley Subareas*

The water budget being presented in Chapter 6 of the Upper Valley Subarea GSP (draft dated July 2, 2021) remains heavily reliant upon a version of the provisional US Geological Survey (USGS) SVIHM model. In this version of the SVIHM model, it was discovered that historical pumping was significantly under represented as compared with the actual pumping data for the valley, as reported under Monterey County Ordinance No. 3663 and the Groundwater Extraction Management System (GEMS). The GSP subarea boundaries and the boundaries for GEMS reporting differ somewhat, but for general contrast, the magnitude of pumping in the SVIHM model is underestimated by 22% in the Upper Valley subarea and 33% in the Forebay subarea, as contrasted with the GEMS pumping records over the period of record from 1995 to 2016 (see Table 1).

Table 1 – Comparison of GEMS and SVIHM Pumping (SVIHM numbers are provisional, as reported in April and July, 2021 in draft GSP documents)

Water Budget Attribute	Subbasin	Average 1995-2016 GEMS (AFA)	1980-2016 GSP Based on SVIHM (AFA)	Percentage Difference btwn SVIHM and GEMS
Groundwater Pumping (AG + Urb)	Upper Valley	136,818	91,600	-33.0%
	Forebay	146,649	108,700	-25.9%
	Eastside	97,804	72,600	-25.8%
	Pressure	120,425	94,300	-21.7%

To illustrate the above expressed concern, the GEMS reported pumping in 2016 for the Upper Valley

is 127,699 AF. The draft Upper Valley GSP reports the pumping based on the SVIHM (provisional) modeling at 88,900 AF for 2016 (GSP July 2, 2021, Table 6-5), a notably lower value (values unadjusted for basin subarea differences between GEMS reporting and the GSP).

Average SVIHM (provisional) pumping for the time frame of 1980 to 2016 from the Upper Valley subarea is estimated at 91,600 AF, while the average GEMS reported pumping for 1995-2016 is 136,818 AF (unadjusted for basin subarea differences between GEMS reporting and the GSP).

Water budgets require a balance between inflows and outflows, when the change in aquifer storage is near zero, which is the case over the long-term in the Upper Valley and Forebay subareas. Therefore, there is an equal magnitude unidentified error in the GSP water budget reporting on inflow side of the equation. This could be either underestimation of streambed recharge or deep percolation of irrigation water, or a combination of both.

In summary the water budget being provided in the draft GSP has known significant errors due to the reliance upon the provisional (work-in-progress) SVIHM model. As such the information being reported in neither accurate nor the best available science. As an alternative to the provisional SVIHM model, traditional water budget computation methods can be utilized to define the major water budget parameters using data from stream flow gages, crop types and published crop water consumption, along with use of prior published studies for the Salinas Valley. Alternatively, it is my understanding the error in pumping has been corrected in a more current version of the SVIHM, and if available should be used to model derived water budget values that more reasonably match existing data, expressly, the GEMS pumping data.

To continue to perpetuate an erroneous water balance in the GSP, which will become a quasi-regulatory document, is both confusing and inaccurate, and simply not best available practices or science, irrespective of disclaimers.