

SUBBASIN COMMITTEES PROGRAM

Establishes guidelines for selecting and appointing members to the SVBGSA Subbasin Committees (SBCs) and outlines procedures for their operations, decision-making, and governance.

Approved Date	Resolution	Review Cycle	Initial Date
09/10/2026	N/A	2 years	06/13/2024

1. SBC Role and Purpose

The Salinas Valley Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency (SVBGSA) Board of Directors (Board) utilizes the Subbasin Committee (SBC) format to foster robust discussion, informed deliberation, and collaborative engagement around the implementation of Groundwater Sustainability Plans (GSPs) within the region's distinct subbasins.

SBCs' primary purpose is to facilitate the two-way exchange of information between SVBGSA and local stakeholders within each subbasin. Committee members play a vital role in receiving updates and technical information from the agency and in disseminating that information back to their communities to promote awareness, transparency, and local engagement in groundwater sustainability efforts.

While SBCs may make recommendations to the Board, they do not possess independent decision-making authority over SVBGSA actions or policies. Their input is valued as a means of ensuring that regional perspectives and concerns are reflected in SVBGSA's planning and implementation activities.

Subbasin Committees are tasked with the following responsibilities:

- Review and provide input on the development and refinement of sustainability criteria tailored to the conditions and needs of their respective subbasins;
- Focus on projects and management actions that are most relevant and effective for addressing local groundwater challenges;
- Gather and relay community feedback, acting as a conduit between the public and SVBGSA staff and leadership;
- Identify and evaluate potential funding mechanisms that align with local preferences and capacities;
- Provide constructive feedback to SVBGSA staff on programs, outreach efforts, and implementation strategies.

Through these responsibilities, SBCs strengthen SVBGSA's commitment to regional collaboration, transparency, and effective implementation of SGMA goals across the Salinas Valley.

2. SBC Membership

Membership includes stakeholders who have demonstrated collaboration and leadership in water-related areas. Seats are allocated to individuals rather than organizations, with a limit of 12 members per committee. If more than 12 qualified individuals apply, the Board may create a prioritized waiting list. Qualified applicants who are not appointed may be placed on the waiting list and considered at a subsequent review without the need to reapply.

Members are expected to attend all respective committee meetings, typically held bimonthly or quarterly. They are also encouraged to participate in Board meetings when relevant items are discussed. Members must sign and adhere to the SVBGSA Code of Conduct, thereby committing to foster a positive, constructive culture.

Eligibility criteria include:

- Reside or work within the specific subbasin boundaries of the Salinas Valley.
 - "Reside": Permanent residence in the subbasin
 - "Work": Refers to being self-employed, employed, or acting as an authorized representative of an organization or agency involved in the subbasin or a neighboring adjudicated basin.
- Be a minimum of 18 years old
- Expressed interest in water-related issues and civic service
- Availability for attending regular meetings
- Commitment to a 2-year term
- A committee may consist of no more than five Board members at any given time.
- Only one member from each household may serve.

SBC members are appointed for two-year terms starting in even-numbered fiscal years (July/August). Members may serve multiple terms but must reapply. Applications for SBC membership are accepted on a continuous basis. SVBGSA staff compile and review all applications received twice a year. If there are vacancies on the respective SBC at the time of review, the applications will be brought forward to the Board for appointment. An individual appointed to fill a vacancy serves the remainder of the current two-year term rather than a new two-year term. The Board will make appointments considering the potential contributions of the individuals and aiming for a diverse and well-balanced makeup of each SBC. The Board may remove an SBC member if they no longer meet eligibility requirements or if they violate the Code of Conduct.

3. SBC Meeting Guidelines and Decision-Making

This section offers operational guidelines for SBCs and serves as a reference for committee members, staff, and the Board.

- SBCs should submit formal motions only when staff present the item for action and it is progressing through the review process toward the Board, or for routine business matters such as approval of minutes or meeting schedules. Motions should be consistent with the committee's advisory role, such as making recommendations to the Board.
- When an idea or initiative originates within the committee, the committee must first make a request to agendize the item for discussion at a future meeting to ensure compliance with the Brown Act. At that future meeting, such items can be discussed, explored, and/or refined, which permits staff to determine whether the item requires Board action or is simply an administrative function.
- If an item is already planned and is recommended by staff for action, the committee may vote to support it or provide feedback. If a new idea is proposed, staff will determine whether it requires Board approval, can be addressed administratively, or needs further development before it is returned to the committee for refinement.

4. Committee Chair and Vice Chair Responsibilities

Each SBC elects a Chair and a Vice Chair of the Committee at their first meeting after the appointments are made by the Board. The Chair serves as the primary facilitator and representative of the SBC. Key responsibilities include:

- Presiding over committee meetings to ensure orderly discussion and adherence to the agenda
- Coordinating with SVBGSA staff to set meeting agendas and prioritize discussion items relevant to the subbasin
- Encouraging full participation by committee members and maintain a respectful, inclusive environment for public input
- Ensuring that committee recommendations and input are clearly communicated to the SVBGSA Board of Directors or staff as appropriate
- Serving as a liaison between the committee and the Board, helping interpret agency objectives and subbasin-specific concerns.

The Vice Chair supports the Chair and fulfills leadership duties when the Chair is unavailable. Responsibilities include:

- Acting as Chair in the Chair's absence, presiding over meetings and performing all related duties
- Assisting in agenda planning and meeting facilitation as needed
- Supporting communication efforts between committee members, the community, and SVBGSA staff
- Collaborating with the Chair to maintain meeting effectiveness and continuity of leadership.

Governance training for SBC Chairs and Vice Chairs will be offered periodically to reinforce the best practices.

Version History

V1: 06/13/2024

V2: 10/10/2024

V3: 08/14/2025

V4: 09/10/2026