

ARVIN COMMUNITY SERVICES DISTRICT
BOARD OF DIRECTORS SPECIAL MEETING
June 13, 2022

AGENDA

AGENDA ITEM 1: Consider introduction of Draft South of Kern River Groundwater Sustainability Plan for Public Comment

DESCRIPTION: Arvin Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA), which includes the Arvin Community Services District (ACSD) boundary, is in the process of transitioning its Management Area Plan (MAP) into a Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP; the “South of Kern River (SOKR)” GSP) in coordination with Wheeler Ridge-Maricopa GSA and Tejon-Castac Water District (TCWD) GSA.

Revisions will include: (1) reorganizing and synthesizing the three separate MAPs previously prepared and separately adopted by Arvin-Edison Water Storage District (AEWSD), Wheeler Ridge-Maricopa Water Storage District (WRMWS), and TCWD for inclusion in the Kern Groundwater Authority (KGA) Umbrella GSP; and (2) addressing deficiencies identified in the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) *Incomplete Determination of the 2020 Groundwater Sustainability Plans Submitted for the San Joaquin Valley – Kern County Subbasin dated 28 January 2022*.

It shall be noted that the three MAPs were prepared by the same consultant, EKI, and had several similarities in addressing SGMA regulations and approach to SGMA implementation. As such, provided the synthesizing of the three MAPs, duplication was removed and stated just once as appropriate.

Over the past several months, the three SOKR GSAs, including ACSD, have participated in numerous Kern County Subbasin (Basin)-wide coordination efforts to develop a coordinated response to DWR’s comments. Basin-wide coordination efforts have included the following:

- Weekly meetings of Basin GSA managers and/or GSA member entities (at times twice a week);
- Basin Coordination Committee meetings with GSA representatives;
- Policy Committee meetings; and,
- Consultation meetings with DWR.

The following revisions to the original Arvin-Edison MAP have been made in developing the SOKR GSP to address the deficiencies DWR identified in its evaluation of the five (5) GSPs submitted for the Basin in 2020, and in an effort to improve overall Basin coordination efforts.

Deficiency #1 – The [Basin] GSPs Do Not Establish Undesirable Results that are Consistent for the Entire Subbasin

- Updated Local Undesirable Results Criteria (i.e., Trigger) for each applicable Sustainability Indicator to be consistent with Basin-wide definitions. It shall be noted the SOKR methodology related to minimum threshold test of 40% of the monitoring wells for 4 consecutive measurements (over 2-years) was adopted by the Subbasin.
- Developed a Minimum Threshold Exceedance Policy in coordination with other GSAs in the Basin (Section 18).

Deficiency #2 – The [Basin] Plan Does Not Set Minimum Thresholds for Chronic Lowering of Groundwater Levels in a Manner Consistent with the Requirements of SGMA and the GSP Regulations

- Clearly identified Beneficial Users for each applicable Sustainability Indicator in the Undesirable Results section (Section 13).
- For each applicable Sustainability Indicator, clearly identified its relationship with other Sustainability Indicators, potential impact(s) to adjacent Management Areas (MA) within the Basin and outside of the Basin, potential impact(s) to Beneficial Users, State/Federal/Local standards, and measurement of Minimum Threshold (MT), as shown in Exhibit B.
- For Degraded Water Quality, added California Water Code (CWC) § 10727.2 reference to the justification of Local Undesirable Results Criteria, as shown in Exhibit B. GSAs only need to address degradation of water quality caused by groundwater management (i.e., extraction and recharge) in the basin, and are not required to address URs that occurred before January 1, 2015. As such, it is not under the purview of the GSA to regulate several “legacy” constituents of concern.
- Expanded discussion of the Sustainable Management Criteria (SMC) development process for Degraded Water Quality, including the screening process for selecting the constituents of concern for which SMC were developed; added the attached figure that illustrates the screening process.
- Defined additional Water Quality SMC for Arsenic at ten (10) Representative Monitoring Wells (RMW), including seven existing RMS within AEWS and two additional ACSD Wells (#16 and #17). In the original Arvin-Edison MAP, Water Quality SMC for arsenic were only defined at one well - ACSD Well #14.
- Expanded discussion of the data and methodologies used to conduct the Well Impacts Analysis.
- For Chronic Lowering of Groundwater Levels, added a well age analysis to the justification of Local Undesirable Results Criteria.
- Expanded the description of the Impacted Well Mitigation Program, including a timeline for implementation and scope of the program, and how user impacts caused by continued groundwater level decline early in GSP implementation will be addressed.

Deficiency #3 – The [Basin] Plan’s Land Subsidence Sustainable Management Criteria Do Not Satisfy the Requirements of SGMA and the GSP Regulations

- Added a figure showing the GSP areas relative to Regional Critical Infrastructure within the Basin as identified by the Basin. As shown in Exhibit A, Regional Critical Infrastructure located within the Arvin-Edison MA includes AEWS’s canal and a high-pressure gas pipeline. There is also a railroad which the Basin GSAs have determined does not warrant further Basin-wide consideration but could be addressed within its management area (i.e., Basin is focused on the California Aqueduct and the Friant-Kern Canal).
- Added a figure showing the Arvin-Edison MA relative to the Interferometric Synthetic Aperture Radar (INSAR) data that represents total vertical ground surface displacement between 2015 and 2021. As shown in Exhibit A, both historical and recent subsidence data indicate there has been notable inelastic subsidence within the Arvin-Edison MA, particularly east of the City of Arvin.

- Added description of Basin-wide subsidence information to both Table SMC-1 (Exhibit B) and in text.
- Added description that the Arvin-Edison MA is participating in the Subsidence Study and Basin Study being completed by the Basin.

Additional Revisions

- Described the formation of Arvin GSA.
- Defined the new SOKR GSP area that includes the Arvin-Edison MA, Wheeler Ridge-Maricopa MA, and Tejon-Castac MA and associated governance.
- Added description that AEWSD successfully organized and held election under Proposition 218 to increase general project service charges, including a commitment to the Arvin-Edison MA's Projects and Management Actions (PMAs).
- Added description of progress towards the implementation of several of the planned PMAs, including construction of the Sunset Spreading Works and Eastside Canal Intertie as well as the completion of CEQA/NEPA as well as 30% design related to installation of pipelines into the Groundwater Service Area to offset groundwater extractions with surface water delivery.
- Added language related to the "demonstration of sustainability" to demonstrate that continued, proactive sustainable management of groundwater is occurring in the Arvin-Edison MA.

RECOMMENDATION: Staff is recommending the Board of Directors introduce the Draft South of Kern River Groundwater Sustainability Plan for public comment on District website.

FINANCIAL IMPACT: None.

ATTACHMENTS (2): Exhibit A and B