Minutes of the Meeting of the Central Delta-Mendota Groundwater Sustainability Agency

Thursday, April 23, 2026, 10:00 AM

Board Room, Santa Nella County Water District
12931 CA-33, Gustine, CA 95322
And
52027 West Althea Ave., Firebaugh, CA 93622

Central Delta-Mendota Groundwater Sustainability Agency Members and Alternates Present
Aaron Barcellos, Member – Pacheco Water District
Amy Montgomery, Member – Santa Nella County Water District
Augustine Ramirez, Alternate – Fresno County
Brian Silva, Alternate – San Luis Water District
Juan Cadena, Alternate – Mercy Springs Water District (MSWD) – at noticed location
Damian Aragona, Member – Widren Water District (WWD) (arrived at 10:03 a.m.)
Danny Wade, Member – Tranquillity Irrigation District and Fresno Slough Water District
Wayne Western, Member – Panoche Water District

Absent
Eagle Field Water District
Oro Loma Water District
Merced County

Others Present
Lauren Layne – Baker Manock & Jensen (BMJ)
Karlee Liddy – Hallmark Group
Patrick McGowan – Panoche Water District

Others Present Via Zoom
Amir Mani – EKI
Adan Ortiz – Fresno County
Gilber Torres – Fresno County
Jacqueline Harris – Hallmark Group
Joe Hopkins – P&P
Juan Cadena – Panoche Water District
Rachel Alstrom – Baker Manock & Jensen
Susan Xie – EKI
Taylor Blakslee – Hallmark Group

1. **Call to Order/Roll Call**
   Chair Barcellos called the meeting to order at 10:00 AM.

2. **Pledge of Allegiance**
   Chair Barcellos led the pledge of allegiance.

3. **Committee to Consider Corrections or Additions to the Agenda of Items, as authorized by Government Code Section 54950 et seq.**
   No corrections or additions were made.

4. **Opportunity for Public Comment**
   There was no public comment.

5. **Review and Take Action on Consent Calendar (Barcellos) Item 5b was pulled from the Consent Calendar.**

a. Minutes for the March 26, 2026 Meeting of the Central Delta-Mendota GSA
Motion:
Director Western made a motion to approve the minutes of the March 26, 2026 meeting. The motion was seconded by Director Silva and passed unanimously via roll call vote.

b. Budget-to-Actual Report
Jacquline Harris, Hallmark Group CFO, provided an overview of the budget-to-actual report and Director Montgomery read the letter from Chase Bank authorizing her as the bank account administrator.

Motion:
Director Western made a motion to approve the budget to actual report and financial statements. The motion was seconded by Director Aragona and passed unanimously via roll call vote.

6. **Direction on the Proposed Subbasin Model Calibration Phased Approach and Cost Share**
Taylor Blakslee introduced this item and stated that the technical ad hoc met on April 22, 2026 to review and discuss the phased approach. The ad hoc confirmed unanimous support for the phased approach as presented by EKI. Amir Mani (EKI) provided a summary of the phased approach for the Central DM GSA Board consideration of approval. He stated that tasks 2-6 of Phase 1 may overlap and are not necessarily sequential.

Motion:
Director Ramirez made a motion to approve the phased approach to the model calibration as presented. The motion was seconded by Director Western and passed unanimously via roll call vote.

Blakslee stated that in past DM JPA Board meetings, there was concern raised regarding the cost share allocations for the model calibration and future technical efforts in the Subbasin. The DM JPA Board directed staff to convene the budget ad hoc to explore other potential cost share allocation approaches, and to provide a recommendation at the May 18, 2026 meeting.

The budget ad hoc met on April 21, 2026, and agreed that 1/7th or acreage options were not likely for DM JPA Board to reach consensus. The ad hoc developed four additional cost share options, which were provided in the Board packet, and determined that there may be a lack of agreement on what constitutes a technical cost for the Subbasin. Last, he stated that there was a recommendation from the technical ad hoc to use a 5-year moving average for cost share options that incorporate a gross pumping or pumping density component.

Layne provided context for the existing 1/7th cost share allocation under the JPA Agreement and MOA, and added that the special project agreement for the DM Subbasin GSAs to develop a single GSP was a 1-time agreement under which a different cost share allocation was possible (Exhibit B). She stated that if a new cost share allocation for the model calibration and future technical efforts was approved at the DM JPA Board level, it may prompt GSA Group representatives to consider a weighted voting structure, and would require revisions to the JPA Agreement. She further stated that a revision in the JPA Agreement could contemplate changing the current unanimous voting requirements to approve certain items, such as those concerning the DM JPA budget. Lastly, she stated that the 2 or 3 smaller GSAs concerned with costs could consolidate their seat, and therefore their vote, leading to only 5 seats (to keep it an odd number).

Director McGowan stated that he feels options E, D, and F could be favorable for the Central DM GSA Group, and expressed concern that the SJREC representative was not able to attend the budget ad hoc meeting due to quorum restrictions.

Director Ramirez reminded the Board that technical costs to the Subbasin used to be covered by the GSAs directly, and stated that he prefers a cost share allocation that considers proportionality.

Chair Barcellos stated that he does not want to rework the JPA Agreement, and highly prefers to avoid weighted voting procedures. He stated that he prefers the DM Subbasin JPA stick to the existing 1/7th cost share allocation, but is also open to option D (Option D = 50% Entity + 50% Gross Pumping) because that is the cost share structure for the Central DM GSA JPA budget.

The Board directed the Central DM representative to the DM JPA Board to approve cost share options A and D (Option A= 1/7th Entity Split and Option D = 50% Entity + 50% Gross Pumping) at the upcoming DM Subbasin JPA Board meeting on May 18, 2026. The Board further directed the Central DM representative, if other options are discussed, to bring those options back to the Central DM GSA Board for consideration of approval.

7. **Direction on Well Registration and Metering Compliance**

Blakslee introduced this item stating that the updated well registration and metering policies were presented by legal counsel and approved by the Board during the March 26, 2026 meeting. He sought Board direction on the compliance deadlines for well owners to complete and submit well registration and metering forms to the GSA entities and added that staff would update the well registration form and distribute to all Central DM GSA entities if directed. Lastly, he reminded the Board that there is an annual report requirement that is informed by monthly well metering data from the GSA entities.

Motion:

Director Western made a motion to approve the May 15, 2026 deadline for all Central GSA entities to provide updates to the well census report and approve the June 1, 2026 deadline for penalty fees to be incurred as outlined in Exhibit A of the well census and registration policy. The motion was seconded by Director Ramirez and passed unanimously via roll call vote.

The Board directed staff to update the well registration form and distribute to the GSA entities. The Board also directed staff to agendize an action item at the May 28, 2026 meeting for the Board to determine an appropriate deadline for entities to meet the well metering and reporting policy requirements. The Board further directed staff to agendize a report item regarding residential well registration and metering at subsequent meetings.

8. **Consider Recommendation to the DM Subbasin JPA Board to Authorize Houston Engineering Make Improvements to the Data Management System**

Taylor Blakslee introduced this item, and stated that the approved budget for the DM Subbasin JPA already accounted for the cost of enhancements to the DMS.

Motion:

Director Ramirez made a motion to authorize Houston Engineering to perform the enhancements to the DMS as presented. Director Western seconded the motion, which passed unanimously via roll call vote.

Report Items

9. **Report from the Central DM GSA Representative to the DM JPA Board**
Director Hurley was absent from the meeting and Layne stated that the State Water Resources Control Board returned the DM Subbasin under the jurisdiction of the California Department of Water Resources (DWR). Blakslee added that DWR is offering an opportunity to meet to discuss the components of the DM Subbasin GSP and to help them in their review of the updated document.

10. **Update on GSP Implementation**
   a. **Pumping Reduction Plan (PRP) Implementation and PRP Dashboard Reporting**
   Susan Xie (EKI) provided a summary of the groundwater level and quality monitoring schedule and SGMA reporting requirements to improve PRP implementation across the GSAs. She provided an example of the timeline by which a GSA would need to conduct an investigation once an exceedance has been triggered.

   b. **Q1 Water Level and Quality Monitoring Event and DMS Upload**
   Karlee Liddy (Hallmark Group) provided an update on the Q1 data upload to the DMS, and stated she will work with Houston Engineering to address some of the accessibility issues experienced when uploading.

11. **Program Management Report**
Blakslee stated that an update on action items will be presented at subsequent meetings and the Chair stated that this is helpful to include in the Board packets each meeting.

12. **Next Steps**
   1. Send the DM Subbasin JPA meeting invitation for May 18, 2026 to all Central DM GSA representatives.
   2. Distribute well registration and census report, along with well metering form to all Central DM GSA representatives.
   3. Agendize Board action to determine a deadline for all well metering forms to be submitted by the Central DM GSA entities.
   4. Include residential well updates as a report item for each subsequent meeting.

13. **Reports Pursuant to Government Code Section 54954.2(a)(3)**
There were no reports provided.

Closed Session

14. **Conference with Legal Counsel – Anticipated Litigation (1 case)**
The GSA will meet in closed session to confer with legal counsel on significant exposure to anticipated litigation pursuant to paragraph (2) of subdivision (d) of Government Code Section 54956.9: (1 case).
The Board went into closed session at 11:54 a.m.

Open Session

15. **Report Out of Closed Session**
The Board came out of closed session at 12:05 p.m. with no reportable action.

16. **Future Meetings**
   a. Central Delta-Mendota GSA
      i. Thursday, May 28, 2026 at 10:00 AM (Santa Nella County Water District)
   b. Delta-Mendota Subbasin Coordination Committee
      i. Monday May 18, 2026 at 10:00 am (Grassland Water District)

17. **Adjournment**

Chair Barcellos adjourned the meeting at 12:06 p.m. PST.