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

Thursday, Jul 23, 2026, 10:00 AM

Grassland Water District
200 W Willmott Ave., Los Banos, CA

Central Delta-Mendota Groundwater Sustainability Agency Directors and Alternates Present
Aaron Barcellos, Director – Pacheco Water District
Amy Montgomery, Director – Santa Nella County Water District
Brian Silva, Alternate – San Luis Water District
Damian Aragona, Director – Widren Water District
Danny Wade, Director – Tranquillity Irrigation District and Fresno Slough Water District
Palmer McCoy, Director – Mercy Springs Water District
Randall Miles, Director – Eagle Field Water District
Wayne Western, Director – Panoche Water District

Absent
County of Merced
Fresno County
Oro Loma Water District

Others Present
Adan Ortiz – Fresno County
Gilbert Torres – Fresno County
Karlee Liddy – Hallmark Group
Rachel Alstrom – Baker Manock & Jensen

Others Present Via Zoom
Amir Mani – EKI
Hailey Rowbatham – EKI
Juan Cadena – Panoche Water District
Kathryn Dixon – Hallmark Gorup
Lauren Layne – Baker Manock & Jensen (BMJ)
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**

5. **Review and Take Action on Consent Calendar**
   a. Minutes for the June 29, 2026 Special Meeting of the Central Delta-Mendota GSA
   b. Budget-to-Actual Report
      Motion:

Director Silva made a motion to approve the consent calendar. The motion was seconded by Director Miles and passed unanimously.

6. **Well Registration Project**

   a. **Update from Staff Regarding Well Registration Policy Implementation**

   Taylor Blakslee introduced this item and stated that the well registration missing information deadline is November 30, 2026. Wells with missing data will be assumed to be pumping from lower aquifer.

   b. **Extend Well Registration Deadline**

   Blakslee introduced this item and stated that during last meeting, a few of the GSA member agency representatives expressed the need for an additional 30-45 days to get wells registered in their districts. He added that the Board had agreed that no penalty fees would be incurred for the additional 30–45-day period and the Board would consider an August 27, 2026 deadline. He asked for an update from each of those member agencies regarding the status of the well registration compliance in their districts.

   Gilbert Torres (Fresno County) stated that mailers were sent out to landowners regarding the well registration requirement and confirmed that Fresno County can meet the deadline of August 27, 2026. Director Silva (San Luis Water District) stated that Director Hurley (Pacheco Water District) found a few wells that are not yet registered, but that the SLWD will be able to meet the well registration deadline. Lastly, Director Montgomery (Santa Nella County Water District) stated that three Volta wells (of 11 total in SNCWD) need to be registered and that she can meet the August 27 deadline.

   Motion:
   Director Miles made a motion to approve the August 27, 2026 deadline for all wells in the CDMGSA to be registered. The motion was seconded by Director Western and passed unanimously.

7. **Well Metering Project**

   a. **Update from Staff on Meter Registration Policy Implementation**

   Blakslee introduced this item and stated that in following up with SNCWD and SLWD, it was made clear that while well registration data was compiled in the past from the member agencies, well meter data was not collected. He asked that the CDMGSA entities fill out well meter registration form and ensure that the access statement is signed by each landowner. Layne confirmed that intent of requiring landowners to sign an access agreement (in the well metering and reporting policy) was for individual CDMGSA member agencies to have access to the wells, which is already included in the Water Code and considered in the Central DM GSA JPA Agreement whereby CDMGSA has all powers granted to GSAs, including under Chapter 5 of the Water Code, therefore making it not entirely necessary to gain signatures from all landowners regarding access. Therefore, staff will not enforce the signature requirement, but each member agency can fill out the meter registration form for all wells, and will enforce access if issues come up in the future.

   b. **Direction on Metering of Inactive Wells**

   Blakslee introduced this item and stated that on June 29, 2026 the requirement to meter inactive wells was discussed and there was a request to define or remove "inactive well" from the policy requirement. Blakslee recommended that the Board allow for an appeals process to handle special requests from landowners of CDMGSA representatives for exemption on a case-by-case basis.

Chair Barcellos asked which body the individual would appeal to, and Layne stated that the full CDMGSA Board would need to hear the case for potential exemption. The Board agreed that staff should work with legal to develop an appeals form stating reason for exemption and requesting photos to prove wells are not hooked up to power for pumping. Director Montgomery stated some wells deemed abandoned and Layne stated there are specific requirements at the county level to abandon a well and to follow up on those wells.

The Board provided direction to develop a simple appeals form for individuals wishing to deem their well exempt from the meter registration and reporting requirements.

c. **Establish a Well Meter Registration Deadline**
Blakslee introduced this item and stated that the Board floated a September 1 deadline during the last meeting and would reconsider this deadline for metering requirement compliance.

Director Montgomery stated that she needs more time to meter the three remaining Volta wells that were annexed from the Merced County white area. She added that letters were sent to landowners at the beginning of July, which stated landowners had 60 days to meter their wells. Last, she added that she does not anticipate that the three remaining wells are pumping more than de minimis values and recommended an additional 30-60 days to meet this requirement.

Chair Barcellos recommended October 1, 2026 as the well meter registration compliance deadline, noting that the August 27, 2026 meeting date is the proposed date for the public hearing to adopt a well meter registration compliance miscellaneous fee schedule.

Motion:
Director Miles made a motion to approve October 1, 2026 as the deadline for all well meters in the CDMGSA to be installed and registered. The motion was seconded by Director McCoy and passed unanimously.

d. **Direction to Update the Miscellaneous Fee Schedule to Include Meter Penalty and Set a Public Hearing for August 27, 2026 to Adopt a Miscellaneous Fee Schedule.**
Layne introduced this item and stated that she would simply amend the existing miscellaneous fee schedule to include language for landowners that fail to install and register their meters with the CDMGSA. Blakslee presented the draft fee schedule based on that developed for well registration requirements, and Chair Barcellos stated he is okay with $1,000 per well for failure to register. Director Western recommended amending the fee schedule to include a $1,000 fee for each additional month that a landowner fails to install and register a meter with the CDMGSA.

Motion:
Director McCoy made a motion to set the public hearing date for August 27, 2026, to adopt a miscellaneous fee schedule. The motion was seconded by Director Western and passed unanimously.

e. **Consider Options to Utilize Metered Data as a Component of 2026/27 Fee Collection**
Blakslee introduced this item and reminded the Board that this item ties into the desire of the Board to have 50% of the cash call based on pumping of each of the 12 member agencies of the CDMGSA. He highlighted the challenges to using a 6-month period to inform the cash call, including: heavy irrigation, not all entities are fully metered, etc. He then proposed solutions to those challenges, including a reconciliation process, adjusting the

fee calculation to the nearest full 12-month period, and estimating groundwater pumping by using crop factors for those entities that are not fully metered.

Chair Barcellos stated that based on past conversations, he thought the fee percentages would be based on the previous year's use. He added that there should be a true-up process for those entities that estimate pumping. There was a discussion regarding the reported meter data in the WY 2025 Annual Report from the Central DM GSA versus the land surface estimate that EKI performed.

Chair Barcellos asked about the budget development and cash call process for next fiscal year (2028). Blakslee stated that the first cash call for FY2027-28 would be likely in January or February of 2027 and recommended that the data used for the second cash call of FY 2027 be January 2026- June 2026 with a reconciliation process. Director Montgomery stated that for the annual report, the pumping data used is from October 1 through September 30, which may be easier to align the data used for the cash call to the water year instead of the calendar year. Blakslee stated that regardless of the chosen timeline, staff could efficiently calculate fees for each of the 12 member agencies.

The Board discussed a recommendation to base the first cash call for FY 2028 on January 1 – December 31, 2026 pumping data. Blakslee reminded the Board that the approach is to help define an appropriate volumetric pumping percentage of each member agency cost share. Chair Barcellos expressed concern for fees being based on the prior water year, noting that hydrological conditions may change and cause more pressure to pump.

Director Aragona iterated that the concept and approach for a volumetric component to the cost share is sound, and expressed concern that the pumping data is not yet complete. Chair Barcellos recommended maintaining the current 1/12th cost share split for the second cash call and performing a true-up in FY2027-28 based on the actual pumping data from January 1- December 31, 2026. He also asked that staff create a graphic timeline for ongoing fee collection / cash calls to be presented at the next Board meeting.

8. **Authorize a Second Cash Call to Cover Central DM GSA and Delta-Mendota GSA Subbasin JPA Activities for the Remainder of Fiscal Year 2027**

Motion:

Director Montgomery made a motion to approve the second cash call for FY26-27 at the current 1/12th per entity cost share split with the intent to perform a true-up for the first cash call of FY27-28 based on January 1- December 31, 2026 actual pumping data. The motion was seconded by Director Aragona and passed unanimously.

9. **Approve a Directors and Officers Insurance Policy**

Karlee Liddy (Hallmark Group) introduced this item and stated that the policy with GRSMA totaled $5,212. Director McCoy asked about the exemption of subsidence and Layne stated that it may not be possible to insure against litigation regarding subsidence.

Motion:

Director Western made a motion to approve the D&O policy with GRSMA for $5,212. The motion was seconded by Director Miles and passed unanimously.

Report Items

10. **Report from the Central DM GSA Representative to the DM JPA Board**

Director Hurley was not present, but Blakslee provided an overview of the July DM Subbasin JPA Board meeting, highlighting the effort to create a project list to readily apply for future grant

opportunities. Amir Mani (EKI) stated that Subsidence and GSP Review meetings with DWR went well.

11. Update on Pumping Reduction Plan (PRP) Implementation and Exceedance Reporting
Amir Mani (EKI) provided a summary of the groundwater level and quality monitoring schedule and SGMA reporting requirements to improve PRP implementation across the GSAs. He highlighted the deadline to upload Q3 groundwater level and water quality to the DMS is September 30th, with August being the target month for taking samples.

Chair Barcellos flagged concern for landowners that take on the pumping charges for collecting water quality samples and recommended that staff bring this up for discussion in future meetings.

12. Program Management Report
Blakslee provided and overview of the action items completed since the last meeting, and the Board did not have any questions.

13. Next Steps

1. Staff to finalize minutes and post to website.
2. CDMGSA entities to provide missing information on the well census (including total depth and perforation depth) by November 30, 2026. Wells with missing data after this date will be assumed to be pumping from the lower aquifer.
3. CDMGSA entities to register all wells within their jurisdiction by August 27, 2026.
4. Staff develop appeals form for review and consideration of approval on August 27.
5. Develop penalty fee schedule for inactive well noticing.
6. CBGSA entities fill out well meter registration form by October 1, 2026.
7. Staff draft fee schedule with $1,000 per well for failure to register their meter by October 1. $1,000 per month of continued failure to register.
8. Work with legal counsel to ensure proper noticing of public hearing.
9. Staff to model future timelines for fee collection / cash calls for next Board meeting.
10. Staff administer the 2nd cash call for remainder of FY26-27 activities (totaling $287,601) at the 1/12th per entity split.
11. GSA entities remit payment by September 30, 2026.
12. Staff execute policy with GRSMA.
13. GSA entities collect groundwater level and quality samples in August, upload to DMS by September 30, 2026.

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

Closed Session

15. 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 entered closed session at 11:37 a.m.

Open Session

16. Report Out of Closed Session
The Board returned from closed session at 11:46 a.m. and Chair Barcellos stated there was no reportable action.

17. Future Meetings

a. Central Delta-Mendota GSA
    i. Thursday, August 27, 2026 at 10:00 a.m. PST (Santa Nella County Water District)

b. Delta-Mendota Subbasin Coordination Committee
    i. Monday, August 10, 2026 at 1:00 p.m. PST (Grassland Water District)

18. Adjournment

Chair Barcellos adjourned the meeting at 11:47 a.m. PST.