

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

Thursday, February 26, 2026, 10:00 AM

Board Room, Santa Nella County Water District

12931 CA-33, Gustine, CA 95322

Central Delta-Mendota Groundwater Sustainability Agency Members and Alternates Present

Amy Montgomery, Member – Santa Nella County Water District
Augie Ramirez, Alternate – Fresno County
Brian Silva, Alternate – San Luis Water District
Randall Miles, Member – Eagle Field Water District (EFWD)
Danny Wade, Alternate – Fresno Slough Water District & Member – Tranquillity Irrigation District (FSWD/TQID)
Palmer McCoy, Member – Mercy Springs Water District (MSWD)
Patrick McGowan, Alternate – Panoche Water District
Damian Aragona, Member – Widren Water District (WWD)

Absent

Oro Loma Water District
Pacheco Water District
Merced County

Others Present

Lauren Layne – Baker Manock & Jensen (BMJ)
Sam Cunningham – Provost & Pritchard (P&P)

Others Present Via Zoom

Amir Mani – EKI
Brian Ehlers – Provost & Pritchard (P&P)
Hannah Dickenson – P&P
Hugh Bennett – Eagle Field Water District
Joe Hopkins – P&P
Juan Cadena – Panoche Water District
Karlee Liddy – Hallmark Group
Leslie Dumas – Woodard & Curran
Steve Stadler – San Luis Water District
Sarah Boogay – DWR
Susan Xie – EKI

1. Call to Order/Roll Call

Vice Chair Amy Montgomery/SNCWD called the meeting to order at 10:02 AM.

2. Committee to Consider Corrections or Additions to the Agenda of Items, as authorized by Government Code Section 54950 et seq.

Patrick McGowan/Panoche Water District suggested that the pledge of allegiance be added to future meeting agendas, to which the Board agreed.

3. Opportunity for Public Comment

There was no public comment.

4. Committee to Review and Take Action on Consent Calendar (Barcellos)

- a. Minutes for the January 22, 2026 Special Joint Meeting of the Central Delta-Mendota Region Management Committee and Central Delta-Mendota GSA
- b. Budget-to-Actual Report

There was no Budget-to-Actual Report for approval and that item was pulled. Palmer McCoy noted that his agency was incorrectly listed as “Merced County” and should be revised to state “Mercy Springs Water District.” With that correction, Patrick McGowan/Panoche Water District made the motion to approve the Minutes for January 22, 2026 special meeting. Randy Miles/EFWD seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

5. Review and Consider Taking Action to Ratify the Delta-Mendota GSAs Joint Powers Authority representative and alternate on behalf of the Central Delta-Mendota GSA

Lauren Layne/BMJ noted that the Delta-Mendota Subbasin GSAs Joint Powers Authority (“DM JPA”) had their initial board meeting. This action would be to ratify the appointment of Chase Hurley as the Central Delta-Mendota GSA representative to the DM JPA and Lacey McBride as the alternate. Randy Miles/EFWD made the motion to ratify the appointments and Patrick McGowan/Panoche WD seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

6. Review and Consider Taking Action to Approve the Proposed Central Delta-Mendota GSA JPA Operating Budget for Fiscal Year 2026-27 (Montgomery)

Amy Montgomery/SNCWD introduced the draft Fiscal Year 2026-27 budget for the Central Delta-Mendota GSA JPA. This budget is for only the administrative tasks associated with the GSA. Amy Montgomery noted that the cost is less expensive than previous years following the addition of Widren Water District and Oro Loma Water District into the Central Delta-Mendota GSA. Palmer McCoy/MSWD made the motion to approve the draft budget and authorize invoices going out in March, and Brian Silva/SLWD seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

7. Review and Consider Taking Action to enter into the Revised and Restated Memorandum of Agreement Among the Delta-Mendota Subbasin Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (Layne)

Lauren Layne/BMJ introduced the item and stated that the revised and restated Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) is similar to the MOA that was presented to the group in the fall of 2025. Due to the transition away from the San Luis & Delta-Mendota Water Authority and formation of the Delta Mendota Subbasin GSAs JPA, the revised and restated MOA addresses that a Coordination Committee is no longer needed, that there is a single GSP, and that contracting will be with the DM JPA. Danny Wade/TID made the motion to enter into the revised and restated MOA and Randy Miles/EFWD seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

8. Review and Consider Adopting the 2026 Regular Meeting Calendar for the Central Delta-Mendota Groundwater Sustainability Agency (Cunningham)

Sam Cunningham/P&P presented the proposed 2026 regular meeting calendar for the Central Delta-Mendota GSA, noting that it keeps the meeting date for the fourth Thursday of the month at 10:00 am, with the dates for November and December moved up for holidays. Meetings will now

be held at the Santa Nella County Water District office. Randy Miles/EFWD made the motion to approve the regular meeting calendar and Brian Silva/SLWD seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

9. **Review and Consider Approval of the Termination of the Activity Agreement with the San Luis & Delta-Mendota Water Authority and Authorize the Chairman to Sign the Notice of Termination of Activity Agreement Letter)**

Lauren Layne/BMJ introduced this item and stated that the San Luis & Delta-Mendota Water Authority is no longer intending to contract on behalf of the Central Delta-Mendota GSA, now that the DM JPA is in place. This termination letter needs to be authorized and signed by the Central Delta-Mendota GSA. Lauren Layne also noted that the member agencies of the Central Delta-Mendota GSA must delegate the authority to the Central Delta-Mendota GSA to sign on their behalf. None of the member agencies present expressed concern and legal counsel will follow up with those who are not present. Palmer McCoy/MSWD made the motion to approve the termination letter and authorize the chair to sign, and Randy Miles/EFWD seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

10. **Review and Consider Authorizing Execution of Agreements with Relevant Consultants for FY2027 Program Administration Support and Technical Support for Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) Implementation Support Services (Layne)**

Lauren Layne/BMJ introduced the item and noted that the board tabled the item at the January meeting to be reconsidered at this meeting. A decision must be made as all consultant contracts terminate at the end of February. Lauren Layne further noted that the Delta-Mendota Subbasin GSAs JPA Board / Coordination Committee voted to authorize the execution of agreements with the Hallmark Group for program administration support services, EKI for technical support services, and Houston Engineering for the DMS. The Central Delta-Mendota GSA is being asked to decide on a consultant for program administration support and technical support services specific to the Central Delta-Mendota GSA.

The Board sought clarification on if these contracts would be executed with the DM JPA on behalf of the Central Delta-Mendota GSA, or if contracts would be executed with the Central Delta-Mendota GSA directly. Lauren Layne noted that the board can decide which option to pursue, but the Special Project Agreement presented as Agenda Item 11 would be required if contracting is done through the DM JPA.

The Board noted that an ad hoc committee reviewed the proposals and recommended that the Central Delta-Mendota GSA select Hallmark Group for program administration services and EKI for technical support services. The Board further expressed a desire to reduce the amount of consultants working in the subbasin and the potential cost savings that reduced coordination would provide.

After discussion, Augie Ramirez/Fresno County made the motion to select the Hallmark Group for program administration services and EKI for technical support services, and Palmer McCoy seconded. The motion carried with 6 members voting in favor and 3 opposed.

- Aye: Director Montgomery, Director Ramirez, Director Silva, Director Aragona, Director McCoy, Director McGowan
- No: Director Wade (TID), Director Wade (FSWD), Director Miles

Palmer McCoy/MSWD made the motion for contracts to be issues through the DM JPA and Randy Miles/EFWD seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

11. Review and Consider Taking Action to Authorize Entering into the Special Project Agreement between the Central DM GSA and the Delta-Mendota Subbasin GSAs Joint Powers Authority (Layne)

Lauren Layne/BMJ introduced this item and noted that this Special Project Agreement would be required for the DM JPA to enter into contracts on behalf of the Central Delta-Mendota GSA. A similar agreement was completed for the Northern Management Region. Palmer McCoy/MSWD made the motion to authorize entering into the Special Project Agreement and Augie Ramirez/Fresno County seconded. The motion carried unanimously, with Randy Miles/EFWD having left the meeting.

12. Report of the Representative to the Coordination Committee

In Chase Hurley's absence, Augie Ramirez/Fresno County reported that the DM JPA held its initial meeting to seat the board and elect officers. Other administrative actions were completed for Hallmark Group to begin program administration. Augie Ramirez also reported that the group anticipates that the Delta-Mendota Subbasin will have a hearing before the State Water Resources Control Board in May or June, to consider returning the subbasin to DWR oversight. In addition, Taylor Blakslee with the Hallmark Group was appointed as the basin Point-of-Contact.

13. GSA to Discuss Implementation of Policies and Give Direction to Legal Counsel Regarding Preparation of Rules and Regulations and a Prop 26 Fee Schedule (Layne)

Lauren Layne/BMJ reported that the administrative policies of the Central Delta-Mendota GSA are outdated and the enforcement has been unclear. Legal counsel sought direction to review and update the policies for review by the Board. The board directed counsel to review and provide updated policies and reiterated a desire to enforce these policies to implement a volumetric cost share component.

14. Pumping Reduction Plan (PRP) Implementation

- a. Committee/GSA to Discuss Implementation of Pumping Reduction Plans (Mani)
- b. Committee/GSA to Discuss PRP Dashboard Reporting

Susan Xie/EKI provided a reminder that well registration and well meter deadlines, per the PRP, are January 2026. Updates on implementation should be included in the annual report. Additionally, composite wells that are used as representative monitoring wells must be replaced by 2030. The Central Delta-Mendota GSA is also required to reduce pumping from both aquifers starting in water year 2026, focused on areas of concern for groundwater level MTs and subsidence. The reduction target in the lower aquifer is 3,488 AF in 2026. The Central Delta-Mendota GSA should be considering how this reduction will be made. Susan Xie also reviewed the water quality watchlist wells and where SMCs are still in development. Slides from the presentation will be provided.

15. Discuss QI Water Level and Quality Monitoring Event and DMS Upload (Dumas)

Leslie Dumas/Woodard & Curran stated that Woodard & Curran will meet with the relevant consultants to provide an overview of how data should be submitted to the DMS.

16. Committee/GSA to Discuss 2025 Annual Report Preparation (Dumas)

Leslie Dumas/Woodard & Curran stated that the draft Annual Report will be provided by Monday March 2, for review. The deadline for comments will be March 13, 2026. The Board noted that Chase Hurley has authority to vote in favor of submitting the Annual Report at the special DM JPA meeting, unless unforeseen issues arise that require the Central Delta-Mendota GSA Board to reconvene prior to the DM JPA meeting.

17. Committee/GSA to Discuss SGMA Round 1 Implementation Grant Activities (Dumas)

Leslie Dumas/Woodard & Curran shared that DWR notified them that an extension would be granted to March 31, 2027. DWR has requested a revision to Amendment 6. Lauren Layne/BMJ noted that no Central Delta-Mendota GSA members have funding remaining.

18. Next Steps

- a. Lauren Layne/BMJ will review and provide revised policies for consideration.
- b. Special Project Agreement will be put on the Delta-Mendota Subbasin GSAs JPA agenda for March 9.
- c. Meeting invites will be sent to participants based on the adopted schedule.

19. Reports Pursuant to Government Code Section 54954.2(a)(3)

There were no reports provided.

20. Conference with Legal Counsel – Existing Litigation (1 case).

California Sportfishing Protection Alliance v. All Persons Interested in the Matter of the Validity of the Northern and Central Delta-Mendota Regions Groundwater Sustainability Plan, et al., Stanislaus County Superior Court, Case No. CV-20-001748, Merced County Superior Court, Case No. 21CV-01691.

Lauren Layne/BMJ reported no need to meet in closed session.

21. Conference with Legal Counsel – Anticipated Litigation (1 case)

22. Report Out of Closed Session

There was no closed session.

23. Future Meetings

- a. Central Delta-Mendota Region Management Committee and GSA
 - i. Thursday, March 26, 2026 at 10:00 AM (Santa Nella County Water District)
- b. Delta-Mendota Subbasin Coordination Committee
 - i. Monday March 9, 2026 at 10:00 am (Grassland Water District)

24. ADJOURNMENT

Amy Montgomery/SNCWD adjourned the meeting at 11:49 AM.