



**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
AGENDA LETTER**

**Agenda Number:**

**Clerk of the Board of Supervisors**  
105 E. Anapamu Street, Suite 407  
Santa Barbara, CA 93101  
(805) 568-2240

**Department Name:** Water Agency  
**Department No.:** 054  
**For Agenda Of:** August 22, 2017  
**Placement:** Departmental  
**Estimated Time:** 20 minutes  
**Continued Item:** No  
**If Yes, date from:**  
**Vote Required:** Majority

---

**TO:** Board of Directors, Water Agency

**FROM:** Department Scott D. McGolpin, Public Works Director, 568-3010  
Director(s)  
Contact Info: Thomas D. Fayram, Deputy Public Works Director, 568-3436

**SUBJECT:** Goleta Groundwater Basin Fringe Groundwater Sustainability Agency Formation;  
Second and Third Supervisorial Districts

---

**County Counsel Concurrence**

As to form: Yes

**Auditor-Controller Concurrence**

As to form: N/A

**Other Concurrence:** N/A

**Recommended Actions:**

- a) Approve forming a Groundwater Sustainability Agency and adopt the Resolution entitled "Resolution to Form a Groundwater Sustainability Agency Pursuant to the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act for Goleta Groundwater Basin Non-Adjudicated Fringe"; and
- b) Determine that the proposed action is not a project under the California Environmental Quality Act, pursuant to Guidelines Section 15378(b) (5), organization or administrative activities that will not result in a direct or indirect physical change in the environment.

**Summary Text:**

This item is on the agenda to request Board approval to form a Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) for the Goleta Groundwater Basin (Basin) non-adjudicated fringe areas located within Santa Barbara County, pursuant to the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA).

The majority of water users on the Basin have undergone the lengthy legal process of adjudication, and are therefore not subject to most of the requirements of SGMA (Water Code § 10720.8(a)(7)). However, the boundary of the adjudication does not completely match with the basin boundary as defined in the California Department of Water Resources' (DWR) Bulletin 118, leaving "fringe" areas which are not managed pursuant to the adjudication. DWR has designated the Basin to be a medium-priority basin.

SGMA requires that all portions of medium- and high-priority basins be managed, and a GSA is therefore required for these fringe areas.

These fringe areas, shown on the map included as Attachment A, are primarily located north of Cathedral Oaks Road and include larger areas west of the Goleta city limits and along San Antonio Creek north and east of Tucker's Grove County Park.

The fringe areas lie entirely within the boundary of the Goleta Water District, which is the only domestic and agricultural purveyor within the basin. For the past year, staff from the Goleta Water District communicated to Water Agency staff that their agency would pursue GSA formation. However, on June 14, 2017, the Goleta Water District Board voted not to form a GSA. The only other entity besides the Water Agency that is eligible to form a GSA is the City of Goleta, which has expressed no interest in forming, or being a part of, a GSA.

As the sole entity forming the GSA, the Water Agency Board of Directors would be the decision-making authority for the GSA. Staff would bring recommendations and requests for policy guidance to the Board as needed. In addition, regular briefings will be scheduled at a frequency determined to be appropriate by the Board. The fringe areas represent a very small portion of overall basin water use and it is unclear what the preparation of a Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) would accomplish in these areas. Forming a GSA would protect water users in the fringe areas from State intervention while giving the Water Agency time to work with DWR and the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) to determine what it means to manage these small areas, with limited water use and limited impact on the adjudicated basin.

Based on a preliminary review of basin geology, a basin boundary revision to remove some of these areas from the DWR Bulletin 118 basin is unlikely to be successful. If the Water Agency does not form a GSA over the fringe areas within the County of Santa Barbara, groundwater users in these areas would be subject to the onerous State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) reporting and fee requirements detailed in Attachment B.

### **Background:**

SGMA was signed into law by Governor Brown in 2014. SGMA provides a framework for the sustainable management of groundwater supplies by local agencies and provides tools, authority, and a timeline for local agencies during the 20-year implementation period. SGMA requires sustainable management of the County's basins that are designated as medium- or high-priority by DWR. In Santa Barbara County these basins include the Cuyama Valley, San Antonio Creek Valley, Santa Ynez River Valley, Santa Maria, and Goleta Groundwater Basins.

Each basin's GSA will be responsible for developing a Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) for the basin. DWR regulations to guide local GSP development were approved by the California Water Commission on May 18, 2016 and went into effect in June 2016. GSPs must be adopted by January 31, 2020 for those basins deemed by the State to be critically overdrafted and by January 31, 2022 for all other medium- or high-priority basins (including Goleta). SGMA and DWR's regulations require a GSA to engage interested parties in the development and implementation of the GSP. In addition, a GSP may only be adopted at a public hearing 90 days after the GSA has provided notice to the County of its intent to adopt a GSP. The County may request consultation with the GSA after receiving the

notice (§ 10728.4). Once a GSP is adopted, it must be submitted to DWR for approval, which starts a 60 day public comment period.

**Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:**

Budgeted: Yes

**Fiscal Analysis:**

Narrative:

Staff time associated with SGMA and GSA formation was included in the Adopted 2017-18 budget in the Water Resources Division of the Public Works Department as shown on page D-325 in the budget book. Forming a GSA will allow the Water Agency to determine options and costs for this GSA. If the costs to prepare a GSP are significant, costs can be met for future fiscal years from financing options available to the GSA, as authorized by SGMA, including property or groundwater pumping fees. There are no General Fund monies associated with this Board action.

**Special Instructions:**

Direct the Clerk of the Board to return a copy of the resolution and minute order of these actions to the Water Agency office: Attn: Christina Lopez.

**Attachments:**

Attachment A –	Goleta Groundwater Basin Map
Attachment B –	State Water Resources Control Board Fact Sheet and Fee Schedule
Attachment C –	Resolution – Goleta Fringe Groundwater Basin
Attachment D –	PowerPoint Presentation

**Authored by:**

Matt Young, Water Resources Program Manager, 568-3546