

Cuyama Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency Board of Directors Meeting

November 6, 2024

Meeting Minutes

PRESENT:

Directors

Bantilan, Cory – Chair
Yurosek, Derek – Vice Chair
Albano, Byron – Treasurer
Anselm, Arne – Secretary
Burnes, Rick
DeBranch, Brad – Alternate
Jackson, Steve
Reely, Blaine – Alternate
Williams, Deborah
Wooster, Jane
Young, Matthew
Zenger, Katelyn

Staff

Beck, Jim – Executive Director
Blakslee, Taylor – Assistant Executive Director
Dominguez, Alex – Legal Counsel
Hughes, Joe – Legal Counsel
Van Lienden, Brian – Woodard & Curran

ABSENT:

None

1. Call to Order

Cuyama Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency (CBGSA) Chair Cory Bantilan called the meeting to order at 2:02 p.m.

2. Roll Call

Mr. Blakslee called roll (shown above) and informed Chair Bantilan that there was a quorum of the Board.

3. Pledge of Allegiance

The pledge of allegiance was led by Chair Bantilan.

4. Meeting Protocols

Mr. Blakslee provided an overview of the meeting protocols.

5. Standing Advisory Committee Meeting Report

Standing Advisory Committee (SAC) Chair Brenton Kelly provided a report on October 31, 2024 SAC meeting and is included below:

The Standing Advisory Committee met at the Cuyama Valley Family Resource Center in a hybrid format with Four Committee Members present in-person and two on the conference line and one Committee Member absent. GSA Staff Taylor Blakslee and Grace Bianchi were in the room, joined by Jim Beck and Brian Van Lienden on the call. Two public stakeholders were in the room and up to 22 participants were on the video conference line. The meeting lasted 3.5 hours with constructive and informative discussion. The Standing Advisory Committee has regrettably received two resignations from Committee positions. For personal and professional considerations Karen Adams and Jake Furstenfeld can no longer make the commitment necessary to be on the SAC. Perspective nominations and/or applications can be directed to Taylor or Brenton.

The Committee recommends the adoption of the proposed 2025 Schedule of Meetings.

The Committee took a vote on four motions for recommendations to the GSA and they can be presented when those items come up at this meeting.

10a) Discuss and Take Appropriate Action on CIMIS Station Implementation Policies

Committee member Gaillard stressed the importance of having a fire break around the perimeter to prevent the spread of fire by mowing in the summer. Committee member Haslett was concerned that the estimated site preparation costs may be too low, given the requirements of the CIMIS program. Several Committee members shared the importance of finding an additional location for a CIMIS station in the central area of the Basin.

Motion: Made by Jaffe, second by Haslett

The SAC agrees with the Ad hoc committee's recommendation regarding the Financial Considerations, the Water Use Implications, and the Agreements policies of the CIMIS stations on private property. Motion passed unanimously.

10bi) Discuss and Take Appropriate Action on Farm Unit Policy

Chair Kelly asked what % of change would be considered a threshold between Option 2 and Option 3? Staff replied that this was difficult to say in the abstract. Jim Beck suggested that a change of more than 5% of total CMA pumping for that year would be a reasonable threshold.

Committee member Jaffe asked how often this might happen? Brian Van Lienden related that it likely would be uncommon and was called for at every five year update or whenever the Model is updated.

Vice Chair DeBranch thought Option 2 made the most sense and suggested that the Farming Unit issues were baked into the CMA Allocations by the land use element as opposed to managing extraction from the specific location of the Well itself.

Motion: Made by Jaffe seconded by Haslett The SAC recommends Option 2 with a threshold of no more than 5% of the Maximum allowed pumping for that year, which

would trigger Option 3. Motion passed 4 to 2, DeBranch and Lewis cast No votes

10bii) Discuss and Take Appropriate Action on Baseline Options and Implementation of 2025-2029 Groundwater Allocations

Stakeholder Jane Wooster asked if the % of Historical Use by parcel had changed with the new Model and CMA estimates? Staff said Yes. All the historical use estimates for 1997-2021 had been recalculated by the updated model and therefore the % of average historical use had also changed.

Committee Member Dave Lewis asked if the Baseline pumping estimates and the Sustainable Yield numbers were all modeled by the same calculated estimation of historical use? The answer from the staff was Yes. Dave asked the follow up question: What is the best guess of accuracy in the model? Jim Beck was reluctant to answer this and spoke to the challenge of stating this number. Some areas of the model are more accurate than others and so it's not easy to quantify the overall accuracy of the Model. But between +/-5% was a reasonable guess. Dave Lewis was concerned for the reliability of the Model and that the estimations for small farmer operations like his family's were all within the margin of error and it amounted to statistical noise when balancing the Basin as a whole.

Committee Member Haslett said that this chart demonstrates the inequity of only using Historical Use as a determination of the allocations. Flaws in the data can translate to devastation to the smaller pumpers. Stakeholder Jaffe agreed to the use of the new model due to the improved data and better calibration. She shared the frustration that 2 major pumpers are putting the burden of their overdraft on the shoulders of the many small pumpers.

Committee vice chair DeBranch defended the approach to using Historic Use as a way that treated all pumpers proportionate to their extraction before the passing of SGMA.

Vice Chair DeBranch made a Motion to recommend Option #3 of a Baseline of 44,254 AF. The Motion failed for a lack of a Second.

Motion: Made by Gaillard, seconded by Jaffe

To recommend Option #4 with a consideration for a tiered approach that protects the basin and small farmers

Vice Chair DeBranch asked the GSA legal council if this tiered approach was legal? GSA Council Dominguez said that in their analysis no other GSA has taken a tiered approach to structuring a pumping restriction policy.

Chair Kelly suggested that the law has been changed by SGMA and an ethical, equitable and nuanced approach to protecting groundwater as a commons resource has not yet been attempted. He suggested that the column of % of allocation was a fine example of a place to consider a tiered approach to protecting the small pumpers whose volumes are within the margin of error in the estimation of overall extraction.

Otherwise, Chair Kelly was in favor of the new, more accurate Modeled Baseline that allowed for less loss in overall Groundwater Storage.

Stakeholder Wegis suggested that the issue should be looked at from an Acre Foot per Acre approach. He also requested that once a baseline number is chosen that it not change during implementation. Stick with whatever we come up with.

Motion passed 4 to 1: DeBranch voted No due to councilors Dominguez' comments, Committee Member Haslett abstained.

18) PUBLIC HEARING – Consider Adoption of the Amended Groundwater Sustainability

Plan Vice Chair DeBranch expressed concerns about the uncertainty of the recent model updates. He said that the confidence in the accuracy of the computer estimations was lacking. Committee Member Lewis found agreement with this uncertainty of the accuracy, especially when making a policy decision based on a brand new computer estimation.

Committee Member Jaffe shared that it was very difficult for her to approve a new improved Plan that does not fix many of the deficiencies of the last Plan, such as; Water Quality issues, inconsistencies in MT changes in the Northwest Region, GDE protections and the inequity of the allocations.

Committee Member Haslett agreed with Jaffe that the new GSP does not address the problem areas or resolve the policy problems that this Committee has been bringing up for years.

Chair Kelly felt conflicted between the ongoing deficiencies of the new Plan and the many improvements that it represents over the old one. This is a summary of his public comment letter regarding these deficiencies.

- The GSP should investigate, quantify, and protect the remaining GDEs in the Basin before more are lost. No wetland survey has been done other than a remote desktop illumination of ¾ of all probable GDE's based on satellite data interpretation.
- The GSP should be more protective of groundwater resources and recognize the undesirable result of long term chronic declining groundwater levels and the loss of storage. The end goal of Sustainability in 2040 is 15 years away and the Basin stands to lose substantially more under this Plan.
- The Central Management Area should be better justified with ground-truthed data and Policy decisions should not be driven solely by the current algorithms of the Hydrologic Model.
- The GSP would be more effective if it addressed the causes of long-term chronic overdraft rather than just lowering the Minimum Thresholds to avoid exceedance. Five years into this Plan and no actual reductions of Historic Use have been achieved.
- The GSP would be more consistent if it did not make one-off questionable exceptions for groundwater level declines for one large vine operation in the

Northwest area. The Saturated Thickness methodology is based solely on the property owners request using proprietary science.

- The GSP would be more equitable if it recognized the magnitudes of difference between the few large operations and the many much smaller farming operations in the valley. The discrepancy demands something more nuanced than a one-size-fits-all Policy.
- The GSP would be more enforceable if it had Management Action triggers and timelines, and the GSA exercised its authority and mandate to preserve groundwater and protect the Public Trust from private over extraction.

No motion was made in support of the adoption of the amended GSP.

Motion: Made by Jaffe, seconded by Lewis.

The SAC recommends that the Amended GSP should not be adopted as presented.

Passed Unanimously.

Although the Committee did not recommend adoption of this amended GSP, they do recognize the challenge this GSA is now facing. In evaluating the new Plan, we did not judge whether or not it was still better than the old one for possibly the next 5 years. We also recognize the substantial work that GSA Staff and the W&C team have made toward improving the GSP within the direction of this GSA Board. However, For a diverse set of reasons this Committee is unanimous that this Plan still has critical issues unresolved.

20) Review and Take Appropriate Action on the GSP 5-Year Periodic Evaluation

Brian Van Linden suggested that although most of the 91 page document would be unaffected if the Draft GSP is not adopted he also shared some of the connecting issues that embed the Draft GSP into the Periodic Evaluation.

No Recommendation was made by the SAC on this item.

Chair Kelly Adjourned the meeting at 8:40.

Respectfully submitted,
Brenton Kelly

CONSENT AGENDA

6-9. Consent Agenda

Chair Bantilan asked if any Directors wanted to move any of the consent items out to discuss in more detail.

Chair Bantilan pulled the item on the 2025 meeting calendar item for discussion and pointed out a potential board meeting on July 2nd, 2025.

MOTION

Director Jackson made a motion to approve the consent agenda item nos. 6-9 with the revision to move the July 2nd board meeting to July 9th. The motion was seconded by

Director Williams. A roll call vote was made and the motion passed.

AYES: Anselm, Albano, Bantilan, Burnes, Jackson, Reely, Williams, Wooster,
 Yurosek, Zenger

NOES: None

ABSTAIN: Young

ABSENT: None

ACTION ITEMS

10. Groundwater Sustainability Plan Implementation

a. Discuss and Take Appropriate Action on CIMIS Station Implementation Policies

Mr. Blakslee reviewed the Department of Water Resources (DWR) CIMIS Station requirements and issues with the existing station. He reported that CBGSA staff are looking for board direction on financial considerations, water implications, and agreements.

SAC Chair Brenton Kelly provided the SAC report on this item, which is included in the Board packet.

There were no public comments on this item.

Director Young asked about on-going maintenance and commented Santa Barbara Water Agency has field staff that could potentially help with maintenance.

MOTION

Director Jackson made a motion to follow the ad hoc recommendation for CIMIS Station implementation. The motion was seconded by Director Burnes, a roll call vote was made and passed with 93%.

AYES: Anselm, Bantilan, Burnes, Jackson, Reely, Williams, Wooster, Young,
 Yurosek, Zenger

NOES: None

ABSTAIN: Albano

ABSENT: None

11. Groundwater Sustainability Plan Amendment Components

a. Update on GSP Component Schedule

Mr. Beck provided an update on the Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) component schedule and highlighted the progress made throughout the past year on GSP components.

Legal Counsel Alex Dominguez provided an overview of the three items for board consideration: GSP update, 2025 allocations, and 5-year assessment. Of the three main agenda items being discussed, the 5-year assessment is the only item that is required by

Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA). He added that DWR's review of the five-year assessment can result in the GSP being approved, deemed incomplete, or deemed inadequate. An inadequate determination would result in the State Water Resource Control Board taking jurisdiction. He noted that the board's decisions on the GSP update, and allocations will impact on the five-year assessment.

There were no public comments on this item.

b. Discuss and Take Appropriate Action on Groundwater Allocation Program

i. Discuss and Take Appropriate Action on Farm Unit Policy

Mr. Blakslee provided an overview of the Farm Unit Policy issue and reviewed three potential options for board consideration.

Director Wooster asked If a landowner has joined a farming unit, and their lease is not extended for the full duration of the farming unit, is it possible for them to be recognized as no longer part of that farming unit by the GSA. If they are released from the farming unit, do they keep the cut back acres they were allocated as part of the farming unit? If they are no longer in the management area, can they use whatever water they want?

Director Albano commented that you should be able to break out of the farming unit allocations if you lose your lease and the allocations should stay the same. He expressed concern that option two and three could allow gaming of the system, where someone leases land outside the management area, farms it for a period, then breaks the lease to continue pumping.

SAC Chair Kelly provided the SAC report for this agenda item.

There were no public comments on this item.

Director Wooster suggested that if the lease is not renewed, the parcel should be released from the farming unit agreement so the landowner can use the water.

Director Albano asked about a policy to opt out of 5-year period for allocations and allocations would remain with the parcels.

Director Yurosek commented that allocations should come from the point of extraction rather than the end point. He added that the farm unit issue is an exception rather than a rule, and the GSA should address the issue when it arises.

Director Wooster commented that the discussion on the farming unit policy should be in the future when there is less on the agenda. She commented that there could be strong holding from the farming units.

Mr. Beck commented the administrative solution is to remove the parcel and apportion allocations to parcels. He added that this item is not urgent and asked what additional information can be provided when discussing it in the future.

Director Albano commented that there are a few areas in which this policy would apply.

Director Jackson agreed with Director Wooster that this agenda item could be tabled.

Chair Bantilan reported that the farm unit policy will be discussed at a later date.

Mr. Beck commented that it would be helpful for CBGSA staff to work with an ad hoc committee to determine important details of the policy.

Chair Bantilan appointed Directors Yurosek, Albano, and himself to the ad hoc for the farming unit policy.

ii. Discuss and Take Appropriate Action on Baseline Options and Implementation of 2025-2029 Allocations

Mr. Beck provided an overview of the board's previous direction on baseline options and reviewed the four options that are presented today for board consideration.

Mr. Van Lienden reviewed the methodology to develop the pumping allocation tables for the CMA and the updates to the model, CMA, and land use.

Mr. Blakslee provided an overview of the structure and steps to establish groundwater allocations. Mr. Beck reviewed the impact of the four baseline options on groundwater storage. Mr. Van Lienden reviewed the allocation table excel spreadsheet that was provided in the board packet.

SAC Chair Kelly provided the SAC report on this item.

Stakeholder Dave Lewis commented on the inequities with using historical pumping for allocations.

Stakeholder Matt Vickery commented in favor of option 3 and reaching sustainability by 2038 should be the priority. He commented that Grimmway has pumped less than their allocations, and significantly less water than historic use over the past two years.

Stakeholder Christopher Mouawad commented he has been working with small farmers and their needs are not met by the current baseline and he encouraged the CBGSA to adopt the October 31 SAC recommendation, specifically option 4 with special consideration for small farmers. Significant cuts are needed as the basin continues to suffer undesirable results with the current baseline, which disproportionately impacts small farmers and small pumpers. Small farmers tend to have wells that are susceptible to decreased water tables, and small farmers also tend to have less capacity to remediate dry wells. Lowering the baseline would allow the basin to come into balance faster because the largest pumpers would be required to cut their water use at an earlier date than under the current baseline.

Option four would also allow for smaller cuts over a longer period and allow for small farmers to adapt more easily to cuts in their water allocation. This will increase compliance and successful implementation of the GSP among those with fewer resources to comply with the steeper cuts.

Stakeholder Tilden Kim summarized the letter that was provided by the CMA that discusses how this hearing suffers from a violation of new process and disagrees with the placement of the entire basin overdraft on pumpers located in the CMA due to proper water elevations in that portion of the basin. He commented that there's also a significant level of capricious and arbitrary production allocations solely related to assigned CMA production and sunrise rates. He added that the data is incorrect, and Sunrise ignores sunrise presentation of historical and engineering data. He believes that Sunrise should not be in the CMA for a lack of data, supporting that conclusion. The display path approach has inherent inequities, and that this abrupt, imminent change in the economic impact of the production reduction program should induce the board into the immediate consideration establishment of management techniques to ease the financial impacts of this acceleration, such as carryover, as well as an establishment of a water market to allow distress pumpers to increase the life of their agricultural enterprise they've established in the area. He urged the board members to read and consider that letter in detail before adopting any recommendation on selecting a baseline pumping option.

Stakeholder Dan Clifford commented in favor of option 3 and lifetime restrictions across the basin. He noted that farming companies rely on the amounts that are given to them to do their business planning and a deviation from what has been previously agreed to is going to result in economic devastation. He commented that any selection of option is not consistent with the previous glidepath.

Stakeholder Robbie Jaffe commented on her support for the new model and recommends moving forward with options that include the new model. She commented on the impacts on small pumpers and their minor impact on total pumping in the basin.

Stakeholder Guy Lingo commented that he is not in favor of lifetime restrictions for allocations and that it would deter new farmers that want to grow in the basin.

Chair Bantilan closed the floor for public comment.

Director Wooster commented that the sustainable yield did not have a major adjustment, but baseline pumping changed drastically. She commented on the changes to the model, land use, and pumping in a brief period. She added that Woodard & Curran has mentioned that the model can be improved in two or three years. She commented in favor of the new model but would like to have more data in the model before moving forward with any changes. She commented on the lack of notice to landowners and that landowners pumping less than allocated are not using paper cuts.

Director Burnes commented the old 50,600 AF baseline to the new 30,000 AF baseline is a significant shift in a short amount of time. He commented it would be good to have some process or mechanism to flag larger variances, like over 5-10%, so the board can validate it further before implementation. He is in favor of exploring ways to phase it in more gradually or give them more time to adapt, rather than just ripping the band-aid off. He commented he would like to consider option 9 and consider phasing it in so there's less impact. He commented that the board should help staff to further evaluate options to alleviate the impacts of significant reduction from previous baseline to a new baseline option.

Director Young pointed out that the reported pumping data for 2022 and 2023 is around 37,000 AF, which is much lower than the old 50,600 AF baseline. He argued that using the old 50,600 AF number is not reflective of the actual on-the-ground reality, as that number was "wildly wrong" from the beginning. He commented in favor of option 9, as a reasonable middle ground approach.

Director Albano commented that drastic changes are not fair for owners and there should be notice before implementing a baseline option. He suggested having a water market. He suggested delaying the implementation of the option 9 baseline for 12 months or 24 months, to allow time to collect and review new pumping data, before fully implementing the new baseline.

Director Anselm commented that if the baseline option 3 is selected then there is no tangible cut in allocations until 2030.

Director Jackson commented that the board had previously agreed to a glide path a few years ago, and the new model that came out has now changed the glide path, and landowners need more time to adjust. He commented in favor of option 3 (50,600 AF).

Director Burnes commented that there are significant changes in the new model and staff should investigate significant changes to the model.

Director Yurosek commented that there are issues with the new model and these to be discussed and evaluated. He added that no baseline options need to be approved tonight.

Director Albano asked about the logistics of delaying implementation of a baseline option.

Mr. Beck commented that new data is added to the model and the model is calibrated to see how it compares to the groundwater levels. He added that it would be difficult to turn around model update in 6 months due to policy level and feedback from technical committee and stakeholders. Staff would not provide options if they didn't comply with SGMA.

Director Yurosek commented that a baseline process was previously approved by the

board, and he asked if new baseline options are provided due to the adjusted CMA. He asked if sticking to the status quo is an option.

Mr. Beck commented that the board could decide to stick with the status quo.

Mr. Van Lienden clarified that the baseline options and tables reflect the new CMA boundary from the new model which resulted in new allocations and allocation percentages, but the baseline option 3 (50,600 AF) amount is based on the old model.

Director Burnes asked if the GSA could wait 12 months before implementation because the pumping estimate is well below the current glidepath.

Chair Bantilan agreed with Director Albano's suggestion to wait to implement a new baseline. He commented that there should be a basin-wide strategy. He would like to move forward with an option today and delay implementation.

Director Jackson commented in favor of waiting and sticking with the status quo until more information is provided.

Director Yurosek commented that any option will have a 30-40% impact on any landowner.

Director Williams commented in favor of option 9 and that the old model baseline was incorrect and should be adjusted.

Director Reely commented in favor of option 9 and delaying the implementation of the baseline for 12 months to provide time to farmers.

Director Zenger commented in favor of status quo and wait until more information is available.

Director Jackson commented that he would like to see the existing glide path.

Director Byron suggested adopting option 9 and waiting to see 12 months of data before deciding to recalibrate a model recalibration.

Legal Counsel Joe Hughes commented that there are challenges binding a future Board to approve a baseline. He expressed concern that somebody would say imposing a super majority vote on a future board would really be an amendment of the JPA.

Director Yurosek commented that the next model revisions may not be good, and he is against approving a new baseline today.

Director Wooster commented that the CBGSA does not know that option 3 baseline (50,600 AF) is wrong because no one has seen the effect of updated land use, CMA,

water use, and ET on the amount of water allocated to the basin. The 50,600 AF was based on historical pumping that it may indicate substantial cutbacks have already been made.

Director Young commented that the board should have a five-year outlook, so the same process does not have to be revisited in a year. He suggested implementing a five-year allocation with built-in adjustments, which would allow for adjustments if new data arose, rather than delaying and re-evaluating annually. The glidepath numbers were not included in the GSP.

Director Yurosek commented it is not feasible for a landowner and farmer to deal with constant changes to the glidepath.

Director Young commented that the baseline should not change all the time, but this allocation process is different from the glidepath.

Legal Counsel Joe Hughes commented that Item 19. Approval of resolution to amend the GSP requires supermajority, but the baseline options item requires a majority. If the board sets a policy for an allocation to implement a management action for allocations, then that's a simple majority, because you're not changing GSP to adopt a policy or change the policy.

Mr. Blakslee added that the GSP was drafted to provide some flexibility. The program outlines the sustainable yield, CMA boundary, and glide path for the basin, but details are not specified.

Mr. Van Lienden responded that the GSP mentions the glidepath as a percentage reduction of an unknown number.

Director Burnes commented that this item is fast-tracked, but there's no immediate mandate to approve the baseline options for the amended GSP.

Mr. Blakslee responded that the board had previously provided direction allocations for 2023-2024, but no direction for 2025 and beyond. He added that CBGSA staff need direction on items included in the GSP, which includes a schedule for pumping allocations. CBGSA staff are looking for direction on 2025-2029 allocations.

Director Wooster commented that information was not provided in a timely manner and option 3 is the only option to give more time.

Chair Bantilan commented in favor of having carryover and water market discussions in future meetings.

Director Jackson commented that there is no incentive to change pumping outside the CMA and advocated to keep current baseline.

Director Wooster commented a timeline should be created to address various items

for discussion in board meetings such as difference between perennial and annual crops.

Chair Bantilan responded these issues need to be addressed, but there’s nothing stopping the board from moving forward on this today.

Director Yurosek commented that board members are expressing their concern about deciding on this item. It is not a part of the GSP, and the board should leave it as it is.

Mr. Blakslee expressed concern that if CBGSA staff don’t get direction on 2025 allocations, then there may be repercussions from DWR due to stopping a significant project outlined in the GSP.

Director Burnes commented that there is a board consensus to delay a final baseline decision for 12 months to give growers more time and keep the current allocations for 2025. He suggested directing staff to develop a timeline to discuss carryover, water markets, new data, and model updates.

Director Albano commented there should be a five-year plan, and the GSA should stick to that plan. He thinks the GSA should communicate to DWR that the GSA is planning to adopt new model data and use that for the baseline.

MOTION

Director Zenger made a motion to maintain the current baseline and glidepath for 2025-2029 period for the revised CMA operational boundary with farming units, with a commitment to revisit this topic in 24 months. At that time, we will access additional data to evaluate the performance of the new model and ensure that impacted landowners have adequate lead time to adjust, should any changes to the baseline be necessary. The motion was seconded by Director Yurosek and the motion did not pass with 31%.

- AYES: Burnes, Jackson, Yurosek, Zenger
- NOES: Anslem, Albano, Bantilan, Reely, Williams, Wooster, Young
- ABSTAIN: None
- ABSENT: None

Mr. Beck recommended having the Board ask staff to develop an ad hoc to develop a timeline for items. Mr. Beck provided the following board suggestions: 1) continue with pumping allocations utilizing the “old model” (the model v0.2 CMA operational + farm units) for 2025, 2) update and analyze the model using most recent groundwater levels for review and completion by July 2025 (or 2027), 3) form an ad hoc of the Board to devel the schedule and review criteria, and 4) utilize option 9 baseline for allocations beginning in 2026 or 2027, unless the model update deviates more than 10% from Option 9.

Director Albano liked Mr. Beck’s suggestions but would like to compare the model

output to additional groundwater levels to understand how the new model works.

Chair Bantilan commented in favor of discussing issues regarding allocations, carryover, economic hardships, and variance.

Director Jackson commented that the two largest pumpers agreed to a glide path needed to reach the sustainable yield, however we just cannot go back and forth on this.

Director Wooster commented that using the new CMA will hurt small farmers.

Director Albano suggested delaying implementation of allocations for any pumpers who were added to the updated CMA boundary.

Chair Bantilan asked if the board could decide to provide alleviation for small pumpers mid-year. Water markets are a way of providing additional allocations from pumpers that don't use all allocations.

Legal Counsel Joe Hughes responded that the cut mid-year is difficult, and the GSA should be very clear that those allocations are subject to ramp down.

MOTION

Director Young made a motion to continue using baseline option 3 (50,600 AF) for 2025 allocations then use option 9 for years 2026-2029 in the updated CMA operational boundary including farming units. The motion was seconded by Director Williams and the motion passed with 68.89%.

AYES: Anslem, Albano, Bantilan, Burnes, Jackson, Reely, Williams
 NOES: DeBranch, Jackson, Wooster, Zenger
 ABSTAIN: None
 ABSENT: None

c. Review Public Comments on Amended GSP

Mr. Blakslee briefly reviewed the public comment response matrix that was included in the Board packet, which matrix includes a staff response for each comment.

There were no public comments on this item.

REPORT ITEMS

12. Administrative Updates

a. Report of the Executive Director

Nothing to report.

b. Report of the General Counsel

Nothing to report.

13. Technical Updates**a. Update on Groundwater Sustainability Plan Activities**

Mr. Van Lienden reported updates on GSP Activities is provided in the Board packet.

b. Update on Grant-Funded Projects

Mr. Blakslee reported that the update on grant-funded projects is provided in the board packet.

c. Update on Quarterly Groundwater Conditions Report

Mr. Van Lienden briefly reviewed the October Groundwater Conditions Report, which is provided in the Board packet.

14. Report of Ad Hoc Committees

Nothing to report.

15. Directors' Forum

Nothing to report.

16. Public comment for Items Not on the Agenda

There were no public comments.

17. Correspondence

Mr. Blakslee reported the correspondence received and distributed to stakeholders.

PUBLIC HEARING**18. Public Hearing – Consider Adoption of the Amended Groundwater Sustainability Plan**

Mr. Beck provided a background and purpose of the public hearing. Chair Bantilan reviewed the protocols and process for the public hearing. Mr. Blakslee provided an overview of the public comment process that has been used to collect comments on the amended GSP.

Stakeholder Brenton Kelly commented that the new plan is better than the old and he is in support of the new GSP.

Stakeholder Robbie Jaffe commented that the revised GSP addresses the data gap concerns from the public and that the new model is more accurate. She commented that the revised GSP does not address concerns about methodology to determine to minimum thresholds methodologies and the methodology change that provided an exception to the northwest landowners. The management actions are not well defined when close to the measurable thresholds. GDEs and interconnected surface water have not been adequately protected in the GSP. The measurements of the constituents in the water have not changed from the previous GSP.

Stakeholder Guy Lingo commented it might be advisable to consider delaying the filing of form to get more information.

Stakeholder Dave Lewis commented on the accuracy of the model and allocations. He pointed out that half of the 14 “grouped” pumpers in the allocation spreadsheet have less than five

percent of the allocations, which is the accuracy of the model. He commented that he doesn't understand the use of a model with a 5% accuracy and impose these critical allocations on these small pumpers. The allocations aren't within the accuracy of the model and the basis for your allocations is the historical period, which is not a one size fits all. However, there are no options available to a small pumper who doesn't agree with their allocation, other than the upcoming variance process. There is no discussion of the variance process or the parameters in the GSP.

The public hearing closes at 4:46 pm.

19. Consideration for Approval Resolution No. 2024-111 Amending the GSP and Submit to DWR

Mr. Blakslee reviewed the resolution to amend the GSP and the public comment process that was used to include and address comments on the GSP.

Director Young asked how much of the 5-year evaluation as written is consistent with the amended GSP as written.

Mr. Van Lienden responded that the evaluation would mostly not change much from the previous GSP, as it is an evaluation of how the basin is doing relative to the previous GSP. He noted that the five-year evaluation does assume the GSP has been updated, so the revised minimum thresholds and the monitoring network sections would need to be revised.

SAC Chair Brenton Kelly provided the SAC report.

There were no public comments on this item.

Director Jackson commented that the basin will not reach sustainability until the entire basin is regulated and it's hard to support a plan that doesn't address those issues.

Director Albano commented in support of the new plan.

MOTION

Director Wooster made a motion to approve the updated GSP. The motion was seconded by Director Burnes and the motion passed with a 75.56%.

- AYES: Anslem, Albano, Bantilan, Burnes, Reely, Williams, Wooster, Young
- NOES: DeBranch, Jackson, Zenger
- ABSTAIN: None
- ABSENT: None

20. Review and take Appropriate Action on the GSP 5-Year Periodic Evaluation

Mr. Van Lienden provided an overview of the GSP 5-year periodic evaluation including an outline, and key points.

SAC Chair Brenton Kelly provided the SAC report on this agenda item.

MOTION

Director Wooster made a motion to approve the updated GSP 5-year periodic evaluation. The motion was seconded by Director Young and the motion passed with a 75.56%.

- AYES: Anslem, Albano, Bantilan, Burnes, Reely, Williams, Wooster, Young
- NOES: DeBranch, Jackson, Zenger
- ABSTAIN: None
- ABSENT: None

CLOSED SESSION

21. Closed Session

At 6:36 PM, the Board adjourned to closed session. At 6:55 PM, the Board returned from closed session at which time Legal Counsel reported to the public that there was no reportable action.

22. Adjourn

Chair Bantilan adjourned the meeting at 6:55 PM.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE
 CUYAMA BASIN GROUNDWATER SUSTAINABILITY AGENCY

Chair: *Cory Bantilan*
Cory Bantilan (Jun 24, 2025 14:28 PDT)

ATTEST:

Secretary: _____