



CUYAMA BASIN GROUNDWATER SUSTAINABILITY AGENCY BOARD OF DIRECTORS SPECIAL MEETING

Board of Directors

Cory Bantilan Chair, Santa Barbara County Water Agency
Derek Yurosek Vice Chair, Cuyama Basin Water District
Vacant Secretary, County of Ventura
Byron Albano Treasurer, Cuyama Basin Water District
Jason Higbee Cuyama Basin Water District
Steve Jackson Cuyama Basin Water District

Jimmy Paulding County of San Luis Obispo
Katelyn Zenger County of Kern
Matthew Young Santa Barbara County Water Agency
Deborah Williams Cuyama Community Services District
Jane Wooster Cuyama Basin Water District

AGENDA

May 22, 2025

Agenda for a meeting of the Cuyama Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency Board of Directors to be held on Thursday, May 22, 2025, at 4:30 PM at the **Cuyama Valley Family Resource Center 4689 CA-166, New Cuyama, CA 93254**. Participate via computer at: <https://msteams.link/4GXC> or by going to Microsoft Teams, downloading the free application, then entering Meeting ID: 211 568 992 705 Passcode: et2fD66g or enter or telephonically at (469) 480-3918 Phone Conference ID: 839 596 065#.

Teleconference Locations:

4689 CA-166 New Cuyama, CA 93254	1115 Truxtun Ave., 5 th Floor Bakersfield, CA 93301	1055 Monterey St., D430 San Luis Obispo, CA 93408	14322 Di Giorgio Rd. Arvin, CA 93203
5319 W. Delaware Ave. Visalia, CA 93291	3432 Kraft Ln. Arvin, CA 93203	130 E. Victoria St., Ste. 200 Santa Barbara, CA 93101	900 Truxtun Ave., Ste. 220 Bakersfield, CA 93308
			3170 Crucero Rd. Lompoc, CA 93436

The order in which agenda items are discussed may be changed to accommodate scheduling or other needs of the Board or Committee, the public, or meeting participants. Members of the public are encouraged to arrive at the commencement of the meeting to ensure that they are present for discussion of all items in which they are interested.

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, if you need disability-related modifications or accommodations, including auxiliary aids or services, to participate in this meeting, please contact Taylor Blakslee at (661) 477-3385 by 4:00 p.m. on the Friday prior to this meeting. The Cuyama Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency reserves the right to limit each speaker to three (3) minutes per subject or topic.

1. Call to Order (Bantilan) (1 min)
2. Roll Call (Bianchi) (1 min)
3. Pledge of Allegiance (Bantilan) (1 min)

PUBLIC HEARING

4. **PUBLIC HEARING** – Groundwater Extraction Fee (4:30 p.m.) (15 min)
5. Consider for Approval Resolution No. 2025-051 Setting a Groundwater Extraction Fee for Fiscal Year 2025-2026 and Authorize Invoicing of Landowners (Blakslee/Hughes) (5 min) **[Supermajority Vote Required: 75%]**

CLOSED SESSION

6. Conference with Legal Counsel – Existing Litigation Pursuant to Government Code section 54956.9(d)(1)
 - (a) Bolthouse Land Company, LLC, et al v. All Persons Claiming a Right to Extract or Store Groundwater in the Cuyama Valley Groundwater Basin (BCV-21-101927)
7. Adjourn (5:30 p.m.)

RESOLUTION NO. 2025-051**A RESOLUTION OF
THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF
CUYAMA BASIN GROUNDWATER SUSTAINABILITY AGENCY
SETTING ITS GROUNDWATER EXTRACTION FEE AGAINST ALL
PERSONS OPERATING GROUNDWATER EXTRACTION FACILITIES
WITHIN THE CUYAMA BASIN**

WHEREAS, pursuant to the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA), Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSA) are authorized to collect regulatory fees (Wat. Code, § 10730); and

WHEREAS, SGMA authorizes a GSA to impose fees and increase those fees to fund the cost of a groundwater sustainability program, including the preparation, adoption and amendment of a groundwater sustainability plan (GSP), and investigations, compliance assistance, enforcement, and program administration, including a prudent reserve; and

WHEREAS, the types of fees that can be imposed include fees on groundwater extraction; and

WHEREAS, on November 6, 2019, pursuant to Water Code section 10730, the Board of Directors (Board) of the Cuyama Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency (Agency) authorized the imposition of a \$19 per acre foot groundwater extraction fee; and

WHEREAS, on August 13, 2020, pursuant to Water Code section 10730, the Board authorized the increase of the existing \$19 per acre foot groundwater extraction fee to \$44 per acre foot; and

WHEREAS, on May 5, 2021, the Board authorized the reduction of the existing \$44 per acre foot groundwater extraction fee to \$39 per acre foot; and

WHEREAS, on May 4, 2022, the Board again authorized the reduction of the groundwater extraction fee to \$38 per acre foot; and

WHEREAS, on May 3, 2023, the Board again authorized the reduction of the groundwater extraction fee to \$12 per acre foot; and

WHEREAS, on May 1, 2024, the Board again authorized the reduction of the groundwater extraction fee to \$5 per acre foot; and

WHEREAS, the Agency has prepared and made available to the public a Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Groundwater Extraction Fee Report (Report), which is attached as **Exhibit A** and incorporated herein by reference; and

WHEREAS, the Agency gave notice concerning the proposed fee as follows:

1. By posting a notice on the Agency’s website at www.cuyamabasin.org.
2. By mailing all landowners within the Agency’s boundaries notice of the public fee hearing.
3. By publishing a notice in The Santa Maria Times of the public fee hearing on May 8, 2025 and May 15, 2025.
4. The notices included: (i) the time and place of the hearing; (ii) a general explanation of the fee under consideration; and (iii) a statement that the data on which the fee is based is publicly available.
5. By posting the data upon which the fee is based in the form of the Report on the Agency’s website at www.cuyamabasin.org.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Directors of Cuyama Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency that a groundwater extraction fee shall be set as follows:

1. A \$___ per acre foot groundwater extraction fee shall be set and levied on all groundwater extracted from within the Agency boundary. Commercial water users using 1.5 acre feet or less in a year per well and domestic water users using 2.0 acre feet or less in a year per well are deemed to be de minimis users and exempt from this fee.
2. The Report is approved and adopted, and Agency staff is directed to comply with its provisions.
3. The Board makes the following findings, based upon the testimony and evidence (including exhibits) presented at the public hearing on the fee reduction:
 - (a) Revenues derived from the groundwater extraction fee will not exceed the costs of Agency’s groundwater sustainability program.
 - (b) Revenues derived from the groundwater extraction fee shall not be used for any purpose other than that for which the groundwater extraction fee is imposed.

PASSED, APPROVED, AND ADOPTED this 22nd day of May 2025.

Cory Bantilan, Board Chair

ATTEST:

James M. Beck
Executive Director



DRAFT

FY 2025-2026 GROUNDWATER EXTRACTION FEE REPORT

CUYAMA BASIN GROUNDWATER SUSTAINABILITY AGENCY

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SECTION 1 – ACRONYMS

AF	Acre-feet
CBGSA	Cuyama Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency
GSA	Groundwater Sustainability Agency
GSP	Groundwater Sustainability Plan
SGMA	Sustainable Groundwater Management Act

SECTION 2 – DEFINITIONS

De Minimis User – Commercial

Uses 1.5 acre-feet or less in a year per well. De minimis users do not have to pay a fee.

De Minimis User – Domestic (Non-Commercial)

Uses 2 acre-feet or less in a year per well. De minimis users do not have to pay a fee.

SECTION 3 – CUYAMA BASIN GROUNDWATER SUSTAINABILITY AGENCY BACKGROUND

The Cuyama Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency (CBGSA) was formed in 2017 under the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) to develop and implement a Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP). The purpose of the GSP is to achieve groundwater sustainability for the Cuyama Basin by 2040. The CBGSA is governed by an 11-member board with representatives from the four counties that intersect the Basin (Kern, Santa Barbara, San Luis Obispo, and Ventura), the Cuyama Community Services District, and the Cuyama Basin Water District.

SECTION 4 – ESTABLISHING A FEE

Water Code section 10730 authorizes Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs) to establish a groundwater extraction fee to fund, among other things, the costs of a groundwater management program, including administration of a GSP. The CBGSA has set the fee over the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 period and is based on (i) the CBGSA’s draft budget and cash flow for Fiscal Year 2025-2026; and (ii) 2024 water use.

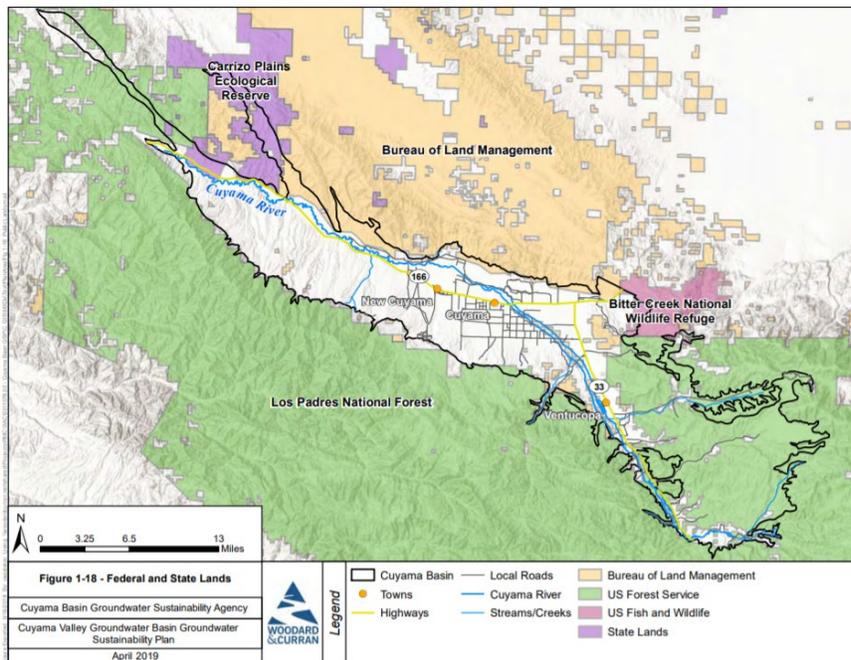
Section 4.1 – Definition of an “Extractor”

An extractor is defined as a pumper of groundwater within the Cuyama Basin groundwater basin boundary as defined by California Department of Water Resources’ Bulletin 118 (see Figure 1 below). The below groups are not considered extractors:

Exclusions:

- De minimis user – Wells that use 1.5 acre-feet or less per year for commercial purposes, or wells that use less than 2 acre-feet per year for residential purposes. De minimis users do not have to pay a fee.
- State and federal lands – Non-commercial water use on State and federal lands. Well use on State and federal lands do not have to pay a fee.

FIGURE 1 – GROUNDWATER BASIN IN CUYAMA



Section 4.2 – Fee Basis

The proposed groundwater extraction fee is based on the CBGSA’s fiscal year budget and cash flow. The budget and cash flow for Fiscal Year 2025-2026 will be presented for consideration of adoption at the May 7, 2025 regular meeting of the CBGSA Board of Directors. The draft budget for Fiscal Year 2025-2026 totals \$1.84 million and is attached hereto as Exhibit “A.” While the current budget total is subject to change, CBGSA does not anticipate the total budget amount to exceed \$1.84 million.

Water use was based on (1) user-reported metered data from calendar year 2024, and (2) small pumpers (water users using less than 25 acre-feet annually) who are not required to install meters, and thus, they report water use based on evapotranspiration crop factors developed by a Cal Poly Irrigation Training & Research Center (ITRC) as shown in Forms I and M included as Exhibit B which include a conversion factor to estimate the gross water use consistent with the metered data reporting methodology. The 2024 water use estimate totals 36,104 acre-feet and is used as the basis for the fee.

Fee Recommendation

Based on (1) the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 budget and cash flow, and (2) user-reported 2024 water use data, the CBGSA recommends the basin-wide groundwater extraction fee set at \$10 per acre-foot.

Section 5 – ADMINISTRATION OF FEE

Section 5.1 – Invoices

Invoices and instructions for payment will be sent to water users in May 2025 and will be based on the 2024 water use previously reported by Cuyama extractors. If payments are not received by the due date of June 30, 2025, a past due notice will be mailed in July 2025 and late penalties will apply (see section 6 below).

Section 5.2 – Schedule/Reporting period

The below schedule outlines the groundwater extraction fee process:

May 7, 2025	Fiscal Year Budget Adopted
May 22, 2025	Public Hearing to Establish Fee / Invoices are Mailed Out
May-June 2025	Payment Collection Period
June 30, 2025	Payment Due Date
July 1, 2025	Late penalties assessed (10% and then 1% per month)

SECTION 6 – PENALTIES

Well owners will be charged a 10 percent penalty after the June 30, 2025 due date with an escalation rate of 1 percent for each month late after the initial due date.

Exhibit A

FISCAL YEAR 2025-2026 BUDGET

CBGSA FISCAL YEAR 2025-2026 BUDGET

CATEGORY	2025-26 Budget
A HALLMARK GROUP	
1 CBGSA Board of Directors Meetings	\$ 136,700
2 Consultant Management and GSP Implementation	\$ 50,000
3 Financial Information Coordination	\$ 46,800
4 Cuyama Basin GSA Outreach	\$ 20,500
5 Annual Groundwater Extraction Fee	\$ 12,000
6 Response to DWR Comments on 2024 Amended GSP	\$ 14,100
7 Groundwater Allocation Implementation	\$ 2,800
8 Adjudication Coordination/Support	\$ 24,100
9 Enforcement for Un-reported Water User	\$ 2,000
10 Prioritization Projects/Initiatives from 3-5-25 Board Meeting	
11 CMA: Water Market	\$ 5,300
12 CMA: Carryover Policy	\$ 5,200
13 CMA: Tiered Allocations	
14 Expand Allocations Outside Management Area (Consider During Annual AR)	\$ 5,600
15 Expand Allocations in Ventucopa	\$ 5,600
16 Perform Additional Santa Barbara Canyon Fault Investigation	\$ -
17 Develop Policy to Prevent Further Water Use in the Basin	
18 Implement Basin-Wide Management Plan (Including Allocations)	\$ -
19 ISW Update Study and Establish SMCs/Network	
20 Install Telemetry for Monitoring Network	
21 Other Direct Charges (Mileage, conference lines, copies)	\$ -
Subtotal	\$ 330,700
B LEGAL	
1 General Legal Counsel	\$ 150,000
2 Adjudication Legal Counsel	\$ 100,000
Subtotal	\$ 250,000
C ADMIN	
1 Audit (FY 25-26)	\$ 10,000
2 Insurance (D&O, General Liability)	\$ 21,400
3 California Association of Mutual Water Co. Membership	\$ 200
4 2025 Updated Parcel Data	\$ 4,000
5 CIMIS Station (Initial Setup)	\$ 60,000
6 CIMIS Station (Annual Operation & Maintenance)	\$ 14,000
7 Noticing (mailouts)	\$ 5,000
8 Contingency	\$ 20,000
Subtotal	\$ 134,600
D WOODARD & CURRAN & TECHNICAL	
1 Grant Proposals	\$ 45,100
2 Stakeholder/Board Engagement	
3 SAC meetings	\$ 24,600
4 Board meetings	\$ 44,300
5 Board Ad-hoc calls	\$ -
6 Tech Forum calls (new item)	\$ 10,000
7 Public Workshops	\$ 18,300
8 Outreach	
9 General, Newsletter Development, etc.	\$ 13,700
10 Website Updates - Maintenance / Hosting	\$ 7,400
11 Support for DWR Technical Services (TSS)	\$ 10,000
12 GSP Implementation Support	
13 GSP Implementation Program Management	\$ 59,200
14 GW Levels and GWQ Monitoring Network Coordination and Data Mgmt - W&C	\$ 21,900

CATEGORY		2025-26 Budget
15	DMS Ongoing Maintenance and Enhancements	\$ 5,600
16	Support for Adaptive Management of Groundwater Levels	\$ 25,000
17	Prepare Annual Report for Cuyama Basin	\$ 48,800
18	Meter Implementation - Ongoing Support	\$ -
19	Response to DWR Comments on 2024 Amended GSP	\$ 48,500
20	Grant Admin (SGM Round 1)	\$ 30,000
21	Perform Monitoring and Monitoring Network Enhancements	
22	Install Transducers	\$ -
23	Improve Understanding of Basin Water Use	
24	Perform Annual Land Use Survey (Land IQ and Local Reporting)	\$ 14,000
25	Enhance Existing CIMIS Station & Implement New Stations	\$ 5,000
26	Project & Management Action Implementation	
27	Pumping Allocation Implementation	\$ -
28	Analysis of Management Action Implementation Options	\$ -
29	Prioritization Projects/Initiatives from 3-5-25 Board Meeting	
30	CMA: Water Market	\$ 1,400
31	CMA: Carryover Policy	\$ 1,600
32	CMA: Tiered Allocations	
33	Perform Additional Santa Barbara Canyon Fault Investigation	\$ 167,700
34	Expand Allocations Outside Management Area (Consider During Annual AR)	\$ 52,300
35	Expand Allocations in Ventucopa	\$ 39,100
36	Develop Policy to Prevent Further Water Use in the Basin	
37	Implement Basin-Wide Management Plan (Including Allocations)	\$ -
38	ISW Update Study and Establish SMCs/Network	
39	Install Telemetry for Monitoring Network	
40	Adjudication Support (if Required)	\$ 38,450
		\$ 731,950
E	OTHER TECHNICAL	
1	Quarterly GW Levels and Piezometer Monitoring (Contractor TBD)	\$ 50,000
2	Annual WQ Monitoring (Contractor TBD)	\$ 25,000
3	Annual Stream Gauge Maintenance (USGS)	\$ 53,200
	Subtotal	\$ 128,200
	Grant Funded	\$ 75,000
	CBGSA Funded (Non Grant-Eligible Costs)	\$ 1,500,500
	TOTAL	\$ 1,575,500

Exhibit B
CROP FACTORS

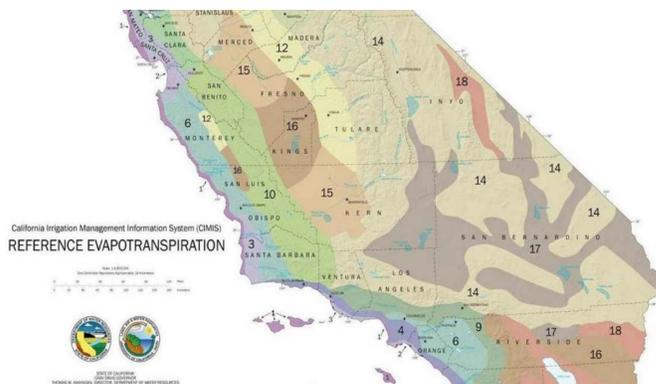
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Exhibit I-1 – Crop Factors

Source Information

Crop Factors are evapotranspiration (ET) values from California Polytechnic State University's Irrigation Training and Research Center (ITRC) California Crop and Soil Evapotranspiration Report (Crop Report), ITRC Report No. R 03-001 accessible at www.itrc.org/reports/pdf/californiacrop.pdf.

The below values were calculated using ET reference averages for zone 10 from the Crop Report (see below figure).



Avg Annual Reference ET by Zone (inches/yr)

Zone	Total
1	33.0"
2	39.0"
3	46.3"
4	45.5"
5	43.9"
6	49.7"
7	43.4"
8	49.4"
9	55.1"
10	49.1"
11	53.0"
12	53.3"
13	54.3"
14	57.0"
15	57.0"
16	62.5"
17	66.5"
18	71.3"

Crop Factors

Crop	ET	Crop	ET
Alfalfa Hay	4.02	Melon, Radish, Squash, & Cucumbers	1.62
Alfalfa Seed, Sudan	3.60	Olives, Mature	3.27
Almonds	3.32	Olives, Deficit	2.58
Apples ¹ (Drip)	2.50	Onions and Garlic	1.99
Apples, Pear, Cherry, Plum, and Prune	3.33	Permanent Pasture	3.93
Barley Wheat, Oats	1.97	Pistachios	2.99
Blackeyed Peas	1.97	Potatoes	3.00
Carrots	2.20	Rootstock	2.23
Corn	2.43	Sorghum Grain	2.43
Cotton	2.70	Sugar Beets	2.70
Citrus	3.45	Tomatoes	2.20
Grapes with 40% cover crop	1.56	Walnuts	3.53
Grapes with 60% cover crop	2.02	Cannabis ²	TBD
Grapes with 100% cover crop	2.24	Hemp ³	TBD
Lettuce	2.20		

¹Value determined by local expertise in the Cuyama Valley.

²Value based on ____.

³Value based on ____.



Form M

MUNICIPAL & INDUSTRIAL

WATER USE ESTIMATE WORKSHEET – 2024
Cuyama Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency

Name _____

Billing Address _____

Phone / Email _____

Instructions:

1. Calculate water use by inputting units used for municipal & industrial water use in column B (see Exhibit M-1 below to calculate units) for the appropriate corresponding water use categories found in column A.
 - a. Multiply units used (column C) by the water consumption factor in column D and input result in column E.
 - b. Total the gallons from column E and convert to acre-feet on row 13.

	A	B	C	D	E	
	Type of Use	Water Use Location (APN, lat/long, or address)	Units Used	Water Consumption Factor (Gal)	Water Use (Gal)	
1	Chicken Ranches		X	3,532	=	
2	Livestock Drinking Water No. of cows, bulls and horses No. of stockers No. of sheep and goats		X	5,520 2,760 1,100	=	
3	Hotels No. of rooms		X	46,000	=	
4	Office Buildings; including Churches No. of offices		X	38,600	=	
5	Restaurants Seating capacity		X	11,400	=	
6	Service Stations No. of stations		X	350,000	=	
7	Stores Sq ft of building		X	50	=	
8	Trailer Court Avg no. of people		X	36,800	=	
9	Elementary Schools No. of students x No. of school days		X	80	=	
10	Junior & Senior High Schools, Colleges and Churches No. of students x No. of school days		X	160	=	
11	Watered Land; non-ag No. of acres		X	5	=	
12	Total Gallons (sum column D and/or E)					
13	Convert to Acre-feet (Row 12/325,850)					

Exhibit M-1 – Unit(s) Calculations

Unit Calculation

	Type of Use	Units Used
1	Chicken Ranches	Avg number of units of 100 chickens on hand for the reporting period.
2	Livestock Drinking Water	Average number of livestock on hand for the reporting period (drinking water only). Amounts derived from NDSU Extension Service report from July 2015 entitled "Livestock Water Requirements."
3	Hotels	Total number of rooms.
4	Office Buildings; including Churches	Total number of offices in building, or offices served.
5	Restaurants	Total number of seats including seats at the counter, chairs, stools, benches and patio seating.
6	Service Stations	Number of stations served.
7	Stores	Square feet of any store, supermarket or shop. Calculation includes employee, customer and maintenance water use.
8	Trailer Court	Average number of people in the trailer court.
9	Elementary Schools	Total number of students, faculty, custodians, and maintenance staff multiplied by the number of school days. If there was non-ag watered land input amount in row 11.
10	Junior & Senior High Schools and Churches	Total number of students, faculty, custodians, and maintenance staff multiplied by the number of school days. If there was non-ag watered land input amount in row 11. For churches, figure total hours and divide by 8 to determine number of "school days."
11	Watered Land; non-ag	All lands, ornamental plants, shrubs, etc., watered but not qualifying for agricultural rate.