

# PRO Water Equity, Inc.

*Paso Robles Groundwater Basin Overliers for Water Equity*

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## **Who is PRO Water Equity?**

- We are a diverse all-volunteer coalition of Paso Robles Groundwater Basin users who believe in finding a fair way of sharing the groundwater that belongs to all of us.
- We are supported by winery and vineyard owners, olive growers, other agriculturalists and many, many rural residents who overlie the basin.
- We are a fact-based organization.

## **Mission Statement**

PRO Water Equity seeks fair and equitable allocation of groundwater for all Paso Robles Groundwater Basin users.

## **Facts about the groundwater basin**

- More water is being pumped out of the basin than is being replenished.
- Demands on the groundwater basin are increasing. In addition, an estimated 8,000 acres of new vineyards are scheduled to be planted in the next two years.
- So far, voluntary conservation has not been enough to balance the basin.
- Levels in many wells are dropping dramatically and wells are running dry.
- The next rain will not fix the situation. Water levels have declined during the past two decades in spite of average rainfall during this period of time.
- Drilling deeper may not work.
- Drilling a new well is no guarantee that it will have water in the future.
- Immediate action is needed to protect our homes and businesses and to preserve our local economy and our way of life.

For more information, visit [www.prowaterequity.org](http://www.prowaterequity.org).

### **What PRO Water Equity supports**

We support a management structure over the groundwater basin that is fair to all basin users.

We are working with the County and the Paso Robles Groundwater Basin Management Plan Blue Ribbon Steering Committee through the public process of evaluating the forms of groundwater management structures that would work in our basin.

This could be either a “County Water District” under the Water Code, a district formed by special legislation written locally to meet our local needs, a district set in place by the courts, a groundwater management district which receives most of its powers through County ordinances, or a combination of these.

PRO Water Equity does not support a "California Water District" which would be controlled entirely by the largest landowners. It does not provide fair representation - or any representation - for the vast majority of the people who depend on the groundwater basin for their water supply. This form of a water district is obviously unacceptable to most rural landowners.

### **Solutions that are needed**

There is strong public support for pumping reductions. Many agriculturalists and other basin residents are in agreement that water use allocations are the only reasonable and fair solution to bring the basin into balance.

It is clear that nothing will lessen the demand on the basin without a management structure that will monitor and limit pumping. The fact is that groundwater levels will continue to decline and any supplemental water supply project would take more than ten years before it could deliver any water to the basin.

There simply is not enough groundwater for all users at the current rate of pumping, notwithstanding the additional water demand from an estimated 8,000 acres of winegrapes that are being planted over the next two years. Water use reduction is the only solution available in the near term.

PRO Water Equity is asking the Board of Supervisors to establish a “time out”, by enacting an interim ordinance which would be in place until a structure can be established to manage the groundwater basin.

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