

**ALAB MEETING MINUTES**

**Monday – March 3, 2025**

**SLO County Farm Bureau Office – 4815 Morabito Place, San Luis Obispo, CA 93401**

**Members and Alternates Present:** Jerry Diefenderfer, Paul Clark, Sarah Kramer, Lisen Bonnier, Hallie Richards, Dylan Theobald, Claire Wineman, Matt Merrell (MS Teams), Tom Ikeda (MS Teams)

**Staff Present:** David Aguayo, CeRae Speidel, and Ian Landreth – San Luis Obispo County Department of Agriculture, Chris Greer – UC Cooperative Extension, Farm Advisor (MS Teams), Blaine Reely – Department of Groundwater Sustainability

**Absent Members:** Daniel Jones, Ron Harben, Jeff McKee,

**Guests Present:** Patricia Wilmore (MS Teams), Jason Kallen (MS Teams)

**I. Call to Order, introductions, quorum determination**

The meeting was called to order by Vice Chair Kramer at 5:01 p.m. There were enough members present to have a quorum.

**II. Open Comment**

Members wishing to address the ALAB on matters other than the scheduled items may do so at this time, when recognized by the Chairman.

Sarah Kramer opened public comment.

Sarah Kramer closed public comment.

**III. Previous Minutes – July 2024 and November 2024**

Thereafter on **Motion to approve July 2024 minutes as presented by:** Jerry Diefenderfer, **Second by:** Lisen Bonnier, and on the following vote:

| <b>REPRESENTATIVE:</b> | <b>AYES:</b> | <b>NOES:</b> | <b>ABSTAIN:</b> | <b>RECUSE:</b> |
|------------------------|--------------|--------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Jerry Diefenderfer     | X            |              |                 |                |
| Sarah Kramer           | X            |              |                 |                |
| Claire Wineman         | X            |              |                 |                |
| Paul Clark             |              |              | X               |                |
| Hallie Richards        |              |              | X               |                |
| Lisen Bonnier          | X            |              |                 |                |
| Dylan Theobald         | X            |              |                 |                |

The ALAB approved the July 2024, minutes.

Thereafter on **Motion to approve November 2024 minutes as presented by:** Paul Clark, **Second by:** Claire Wineman, and on the following vote:

| REPRESENTATIVE:    | AYES: | NOES: | ABSTAIN: | RECUSE: |
|--------------------|-------|-------|----------|---------|
| Jerry Diefenderfer |       |       | X        |         |
| Sarah Kramer       | X     |       |          |         |
| Claire Wineman     | X     |       |          |         |
| Paul Clark         | X     |       |          |         |
| Hallie Richards    | X     |       |          |         |
| Lisen Bonnier      | X     |       |          |         |
| Dylan Theobald     |       |       | X        |         |

The ALAB approved the November 2024, minutes.

**IV. ALAB Governance Membership Updates**

David Aguayo provided the following ALAB membership updates since the November 2024 meeting:

- The District 1 ALAB representative seat has been vacant since January 2025 and no recent updates from the Board of Supervisors (BOS) regarding this seat have been received; the Department will be sending an additional reminder to the District 1 office regarding their appointee for the ALAB.
- Tom Ikeda was reappointed as the District 3 ALAB representative as of January 2025 with their term ending in January 2029.
- Jerry Diefenderfer was reappointed as the District 5 ALAB representative as of January 2025 with their term ending January 2029.
- The Upper Salinas-Las Tablas RCD representative seat remains vacant. However, a resolution was included on the consent agenda for the February 25, 2025, BOS meeting, requesting Board approval regarding the Upper Salinas-Las Tablas RCDs appointment of 5 individuals to its Board of Directors. The item was approved by consent. It is anticipated that a nomination for the Upper Salinas-Las Tablas RCD ALAB representative seat will be forthcoming.
- Looking ahead, the next ALAB representative terms to expire will occur in August 2026 and includes the Ag Finance and Coastal San Luis RCD representative seats.

**V. Presentation: Paso Robles Sub-Basin GSP and JPA Updates – Blaine Reely, Director, County of San Luis Obispo, Department of Groundwater Sustainability:**

Blaine Reely provided an overview of the current status for the Paso Robles Groundwater Basin (PRGWB). PowerPoint Presentation: [https://www.slocounty.ca.gov/departments/agriculture-weights-and-measures/agricultural-liaison-advisory-board-\(alab\)](https://www.slocounty.ca.gov/departments/agriculture-weights-and-measures/agricultural-liaison-advisory-board-(alab))

- The PRGWB is one of the six groundwater basins managed by the county. Includes the basins managed under the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA)

- Paso Robles, San Luis Valley, Atascadero sub-basin, and the counties portion of Cuyama Valley basin.
  - Los Osos and a portion of the Santa Maria Valley basins are managed under court order
- There are other groundwater basins within the county that are managed by the Department of Public Works, such as in the Adelaida area.
- SGMA passed in 2014 and among other things provided for the creation of Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs).
  - The PRGWB has four GSAs which are the City of Paso Robles, San Miguel Community Services Districts, Shandon San Juan Water District, and the County.
  - A fifth GSA was later formed, the Estrella El-Pomar Creston GSA.
- As mandated by SGMA, each GSA created their own Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) to bring the basin into a sustainable condition.
- The five GSAs agreed under the terms of a Memoradom of Agreement (MOA) to collaborate for the purpose of developing the PRGWB GSP. Also agreed to collaborate to bring the basin into a sustainable condition until such a time when a more refined form of governance was put in place.
  - The PRGWB GSP was approved by the Department of Water Resources (DWR) in June 2023.
- Through execution of the MOA, the GSAs formed the Paso Basin Cooperative Committee (PBCC) in September 2017, which is an advisory body that reports back to the five GSAs.
  - The PBCC has proved to be a source of confusion for those wishing to voice their concerns or for those seeking more information on the management of the PRGWB.
    - The PBCC is the place to voice those concerns, but it can't really do anything other than forward those concerns or recommendations back to the individual GSAs who collectively must act to get anything done.
- Because of the challenges associated with the PBCC, and because it was always contemplated in the original MOA and GSP, each GSA determined it was time to consider a more refined government structure to implement the GSP
  - Established by a new agreement between the GSAs
  - Possess some powers delegated by the GSAs.
- As of last year, the GSAs have been working closely together to form a new governing body under the terms of a Joint Powers of Authority Agreement (JPA).
  - The JPA was brought before the PBCC in December 2024.
  - The PBCC unanimously agreed to instruct the individual GSAs to take the JPA back to their respective boards for consideration and recommendation for approval.
- The proposed JPA creates a new authority as a separate and distinct legal entity whose boundaries are commensurate with each of the five GSAs and covers the entire PRGWB.
  - Establishes limited powers of authority, meaning only a portion of the power granted to the GSAs through SGMA would be conveyed to the new governing body. Most notably the authority to develop a multi-benefit irrigated lands repurposing plan (MILRP).

- Under SIGMA, GSAs are given the authority to require mandatory reductions in groundwater pumping.
  - GSAs are not considering granting that authority to the new JPA.
- The last few years of work involving management of the PRGWB have been funded from a grant of approximately 7.1 million dollars that will run out this year.
  - Grant funding has been spent on actions that take steps toward achieving basin stability.
    - Physical actions such as pipes going in the ground.
    - Management actions such as developing voluntary pumping reduction programs or best management practices.
    - Various engineering studies for identifying supplemental water supplies such as the potential to use Lake Nacimiento water allocations.
    - Evaluate and determine a recommended strategy for implementing a groundwater extraction fee program. Involves utilizing satellite imagery for analyzing evapotranspiration rates to determine water use in the basin.
- A lot of work is still needed to continue these efforts to bring sustainability to the basin.
  - A rate consultant was hired to identify funding sources and fee assessment models.
  - The PBCC recommended fees be assessed to keep the lights to comply with SGMA and also provide some funding towards implementing some of the management actions such as the voluntary pumping reduction programs.
  - Sources of funding would come from ground water pumping fees.
    - Three fee types were identified for three pumping class types: rural residential landowners, municipal, and agriculture.
    - Efforts were made to eliminate having to charge rural residential landowners, but ultimately legal counsel advised that all individuals that draw from the basin would need to have fees assessed.

## **VI. Updates from Ag Department Staff.**

David Aguayo mentioned there have been several staffing position changes at the Ag Department at the beginning of this year.

- Marc Lea has retired as the Assistant Agricultural Commissioner/Sealer, Aguayo indicated he has taken over this position.
- Several changes have also occurred to the Department of Agriculture/Weights and Measures management staff.
  - Kenn Burt is now the Deputy Agricultural Commissioner/Sealer (“Deputy”) who oversees the Weights and Measures activities, Apiary programs, and Weed Abatement programs.
  - Tom Morgan was previously the Deputy overseeing the Pesticide Use Enforcement (PUE) program and has recently taken over as the Deputy for the Pest Exclusion, the Nursery, and Seed programs, and the Direct Marketing programs which include Certified Farmers Market enforcement and Organics.

- Sam Bettien has been acting as and will remain the Deputy overseeing the Pest Detection programs.
- CeRae Speidel has taken over as the Deputy overseeing the PUE program.

CeRae Speidel introduced herself and provided some background on her experience with the Department. Speidel updated the ALAB on recent changes involving the regulation of pesticides.

- As of last year, FAC 12978.7 added Diphacinone to the list of restricted rodenticides. It didn't impact agricultural production that much, but it did impact structural and residential pest control because it is now essentially banned in these areas.
- As of January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2025, the Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR) has implemented the Spray Days Program.
  - Updated version of the Notice of Intent regulation.
  - Requires all Notice of Intents to use any California restricted materials for agricultural use to be submitted electronically. Notifications are sent to an interested parties list for anyone within a square mile of an application event.
  - Location, name of operation, and personal information are not provided. Consists of the pesticide being sprayed and general start time of the application.
  - The electronic submittal portion went into effect last Monday. The DPR will begin electronic notifications on March 25<sup>th</sup>.
- A new law involving the notifications to schools of pesticide applications went into effect this year.
  - Doesn't make any changes outright but requires the DPR to make changes to the regulations by January 1, 2026, requiring a separate site identification number for locations that fall within ¼ mile of a school. Meaning if a portion of an identified field falls into that boundary, a separate site identification number shall be assigned to that section.
  - Includes adding private schools and daycares to the notification requirements.
    - The DPR is assisting with mapping these locations for local agencies.

Blaine offered a final summary on the status of the JPA:

- The Board of Supervisors approved the JPA on February 4<sup>th</sup>.
- EPC and Shandon San Juan Water District approved the JPA.
- The San Miguel CSD considered it last Friday but didn't take any action.
- City of Paso Robles considers the JPA tomorrow at their regular meeting.
- There are two sets of JPAs in circulation. One considering a 5 party GSA JPA, and one considering a 4 party GSA JPA

## **VII. Future agenda items/meeting dates, adjournment.**

The meeting was adjourned at 6:19PM. The next monthly ALAB meeting is scheduled for April 7, 2025.

Respectfully submitted by Ian Landreth, San Luis Obispo County Department of Agriculture\Weights & Measures.

DRAFT