

Water Wrights



Kings River East GSA August 20, 2020

By Don A. Wright

The Kings River East Groundwater Sustainability Agency held a remote board meeting on Thursday, August 20, 2020. The meeting was held by telephone only and it started at 2:00pm. General Manager **Chad Wegley** called roll and there was a quorum. The public was asked to speak up and identify themselves, so we did. The usual suspects.

Chairman **Buddy Mendez** skipped Item 2, the pledge of allegiance. He said, and I think rightly trying to do so by telephone took some of the respect from it. There were no conflicts of interest and I mentioned the recent San Joaquin Valley Water Blueprint webinar

<https://waterwrights.net/webinars/> Wegley had no communications report, nor were there any board of directors report.

No one pulled anything from the consent calendar and it was passed. A caller asked about changes to the conflict of interest code. Attorney **Lauren Layne** said the change places directors (and in some cases others) as Code 87200 filers, a higher standard and they still have to file Form 700. That satisfied that question.

The treasurer's report was next and **Marc Limas** of Alta Irrigation District who is handling finances for **KREGSA** gave a short report. It took the board longer to vote than the report just about. He had some good news, it sounded like as there is some more grant money coming. The check is in the proverbial mail.

Wegley presented the board with an action item to move the meetings from monthly to quarterly. That sat well with the board as there was no discussion and a unanimous vote.

Limas gave an update on how the GSA has been doing with getting invoices paid. He said 90 percent of all late payments are caught up bringing in about \$1 million. He said that was remarkable for a new agency.

Wegley said the Groundwater Sustainability Plan is sitting with the Department of Water Resources. Comments on GSPs have been sent to DWR and there is no requirement to respond. They might respond to some of them. Many are boiler plate but some there just isn't the data to get the answers yet.

Wegley said the KREGSA will need some technical help in getting the needed data and information. Engineering firm Provost & Pritchard has submitted a proposal to help monitor wells and gather data. The board felt comfortable working with P&P and the agreed to the proposal.



Layne gave a legislative update saying there are a couple of bills out there to pay attention. She said AB 3030 assigning the state the mandate to protect 30 percent of California's land and water and 30 percent of the nation's oceans. I've been hearing a lot about this so I poked around on the internet and read the bill and found out a little about the author. Assemblyman **Ash Kalra**, whose district sits in the wild and scenic wilderness of downtown San Jose wrote this bill. It has garnered a great deal of opposition, including two big fat ACWA thumbs down. Layne pointed out the bill was vague on what land and water is to be protected and how to do so. It also calls on the state government to consult with tribal authorities and indigenous people as the land management practices utilized in the past created thriving species, habitat and human populations. It was silent on the average lifespan of the pre-Columbian human population in California. I'm an indigenous person of California but somehow I don't think I'm included as one of the consultants the author had in mind. The bill also repeatedly stated the economically disadvantaged and people of color have less access to nature. You know this true because it kept citing "scientists" and blamed much of the problem on climate change. What AB 3030 didn't do is say how much its goals would cost or how they would be paid for. Whoops. It was removed from the stack of bills being currently contemplated for the Governor's signature.

Layne also said SB609 makes it easier to complete CEQA by allowing online posting. It's actually more convenient for agencies to move water. It's still alive.

At 2:27pm the meeting adjourned, but not before Mendez thanked everyone for attending. And that was that.

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SGMA The Sustainable Groundwater Management Act of 2014 calls for the formation of Groundwater Sustainability Areas within Basins and Sub-basins to develop Groundwater Sustainability Plans.

Kings River East GSA Board – Chairman Buddy Mendes Fresno County, Vice Chair Mary Fast, Secretary Jack Brandt Alta Irrigation District, Eddie Valero Tulare County, Fernando Rubalcaba Special Districts Drinking Water, David Brown Special Districts Irrigation Water, and Steve Boos Ag Production.

Staff: General Manager Chad Wegley, Attorney Lauren Layne

www.kingsrivereast.org

DWR listing: Basin San Joaquin, Sub Basin Kings Number 5-022.08