

**Meeting Minutes for the Santa Monica Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency Meeting – April 15, 2026**

**Minutes for the Santa Monica Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency Meeting –  
April 15 at 9:00 AM**

<b>Board of Directors</b>			
<b>Attending</b>	<b>Agency</b>	<b>Board Member</b>	<b>Alternate</b>
	<b>City of Beverly Hills</b>	Robert Welch	Vince Damasse
	<b>City of Culver City</b>	Sean Singletary	
	<b>City of Los Angeles Department of Water and Power</b>	Jesus Gonzalez	John Huynh, <b>Chair</b>
	<b>County of Los Angeles</b>	Gina Natoli	
	<b>City of Santa Monica</b>	Christopher Dishlip, <b>Vice Chair</b>	Sunny Wang

**Meeting Minutes**

**1. Call to Order**

*The meeting was called to order at 9:00 AM by Jane Gray, Dudek.*

**2. Pledge of Allegiance**

*Jane Gray led the Pledge of Allegiance.*

**3. Roll Call and Determination of a Quorum**

*Director Welch, City of Beverly Hills*

*Director Singletary, City of Culver City*

*Director Natoli, County of Los Angeles*

*Vice Chair Dishlip, City of Santa Monica*

*Chair Huynh, City of Los Angeles Department of Water and Power*

*Quorum was determined.*

**4. Disclosure of ex parte communications for board members**

There was no ex parte communication to disclose.

**5. Consent Items**

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### A. Approval of Minutes of January 15, 2025, SMBGSA Board Meeting

The Board had no comments or revisions to the minutes. There was a **motion** made **by Chair Huynh** to **approve the meeting minutes**. The motion was **seconded** by **Vice Chair Dishlip**. A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.

## 6. Public Forum

No public comments were received.

## 7. Informational Items

### A. Standing Item: Report on Well Permit Requests in the Santa Monica Subbasin

Dr. Weinberger summarized the standing item discussion on well permit requests in the Santa Monica Subbasin. The GSA Secretary informed Dr. Weinberger that she has been notified of one well permit application within the Santa Monica Subbasin since the January 21, 2026, meeting.

Director Natoli noted that two additional well-related requests had also been received. The first involved a request from the City of Santa Monica to install a new production well. The Santa Monica Basin GSA had previously approved this well application, and Los Angeles County subsequently requested confirmation that the approval remained valid. The letter of approval was submitted a second time in response to this request.

The second request was submitted by a contractor proposing to install five temporary monitoring wells located outside of the Santa Monica Subbasin. The contractor requested written confirmation that the proposed work was not subject to Santa Monica Basin GSA oversight while preparing a bid for a future replacement well at a Country Club, including anticipated scope of work, pricing, and time commitments.

The third request was a notification of an upcoming permit application currently under development for golf course use.

Written confirmation was requested by all three entities that contacted the Santa Monica Basin GSA.

### Public Comment on 7.A

No public comments were received.

### B. Los Angeles County Environmental Health Division Well / Exploration Hole Permit Application

Dr. Weinberger provided an overview of a revised well and exploration hole permit application issued by the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (LACDPH) in November 2025. While LACDPH has longstanding authority over well permitting, the updated application includes new language requesting applicants to contact the appropriate GSA prior to submitting applications to

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the County. This language formalizes existing coordination practices between applicants, the County, and the GSA.

She explained that, historically, coordination between applicants and the GSA occurred informally, with LACDPH notifying the GSA Secretary once an application had been submitted.

Dr. Weinberger discussed the types of information previously requested by LACDPH for groundwater production wells, which included well location, proposed groundwater use, nearby wells, confirmation of flowmeter installation, groundwater contamination proximity, CEQA compliance, proximity to disadvantaged communities and groundwater-dependent ecosystems, well operation and maintenance plans, anticipated well lifespan, and plans for decommissioning.

Given the formal addition of GSA coordination language in the LACDPH application, Dr. Weinberger recommended developing standardized email responses that staff could use to address applicant inquiries. Three general response scenarios were proposed:

1. Groundwater production wells located within the Department of Water Resources Santa Monica Subbasin boundaries,
2. Groundwater monitoring wells located within the Subbasin boundaries, and
3. Groundwater wells located outside the Subbasin boundaries.

During review of the general responses, Board members engaged in discussion regarding the type of information the GSA should request. Members emphasized that confirmation of well location, installation of a flow meter, and periodic reporting of groundwater production volumes represented the minimum information necessary for the GSA to fulfill its responsibilities under the GSP. Board members clarified that these requests were intended to support basin-wide monitoring and cumulative impact assessment, not to determine the appropriateness of a specific well location.

The Board noted that periodic production updates would allow the GSA to track changes in extraction over time and assess whether pumping volumes could have potential impacts on basin conditions. Members discussed that access to this information would enable future evaluations of consistency with the GSP and support adaptive management, without making legal or regulatory determinations regarding individual wells.

While reviewing the monitoring well template, Board members agreed that requests for production-related information were not necessary, given that monitoring wells do not extract groundwater, and that the standardized response should indicate that the Santa Monica Basin GSA has no objection to such permits. Similarly, while reviewing the outside-basin well template, no objections were raised, and it was agreed that the response should indicate that the GSA has no objection where proposed wells fall outside Subbasin boundaries.

The Board also discussed process considerations, including staff authority and administrative efficiency. Members expressed concern that requiring Board involvement at this preliminary stage of permit coordination could delay applications and potentially implicate Brown Act requirements. Consensus emerged that staff should be authorized to determine which template applies and issue

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the appropriate standardized response, with informational updates to the Board provided as appropriate.

### **Public Comment on 7.B**

Anthony Hicke, Hydrogeologist, spoke on behalf of the Los Angeles Country Club. Mr. Hicke commented on the proposed response template for monitoring wells, noting that the response was appropriately straightforward. He suggested that instructions also address procedures for well destruction and provide clarity on how applicants should submit required information for projects within the GSA.

Mr. Hicke requested clarification regarding the permitting timeline. He stated that the Los Angeles Country Club represents a test case for this permitting scenario, noting that the drilling contractor submitted a permit application the previous day. Mr. Hicke asked when the permit approval could be expected based on the anticipated review timeline.

### **C. GSA Oversight Authorities**

Dr. Weinberger provided an overview of GSA oversight authorities. She noted that this item was requested by a Board member. Dr. Weinberger explained that while SGMA requires discussion of land-use changes as part of the periodic evaluation, SGMA does not define land-use change in a manner that grants GSAs land-use authority, and no land-use change authority is conferred to GSAs under the Act.

Dr. Weinberger reviewed general authorities granted to GSAs under SGMA, as summarized on the presentation slide. These authorities are primarily focused on managing groundwater production and avoiding undesirable results. Examples include the authority to require registration of groundwater extraction facilities; require metering for wells producing more than two acre-feet per year; appropriate and acquire surface water or groundwater, including related rights; import surface water or groundwater; and conserve and store water within or outside of the agency's jurisdiction.

Director Natoli suggested that this information be incorporated into a Frequently Asked Questions document that could be posted on the GSA website and distributed to the public to provide clarity regarding the scope and limits of GSA authority.

### **Public Comment on 7.C**

No public comments were received.

### **D. Water Year 2025 GSP Annual Report**

Dr. Weinberger presented the Water Year 2025 GSP Annual Report item information. She explained that the GSA annually compiles groundwater condition data and prepares a report summarizing basin

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conditions for the prior water year, with reports due to the Department of Water Resources by April 1. The Water Year 2025 reporting period covered October 2024 through September 2025.

She provided relevant background, noting that City of Santa Monica production wells were offline during the first half of the reporting period due to construction associated with the Olympic Well Field Restoration and Arcadia Water Treatment Plant Expansion Project.

Groundwater elevations during Water Year 2025 were reported to be similar to or higher than elevations observed in the previous water year. Although the model indicated a decrease in groundwater storage, Dr. Weinberger explained that the modeled change was within the model's margin of error and consistent with the relatively stable groundwater elevation data.

Chloride concentrations at representative monitoring points during Water Year 2025 were below the measurable objective of 200 mg/L. Dr. Weinberger noted that no long-term increasing trends were observed and that the basin continued to remain within water quality objectives. Overall, the Santa Monica Basin GSA continued to make progress toward implementation of the GSP.

Dr. Weinberger reviewed selected figures from the Annual Report, including the required historical precipitation plot, which is color-coded by wet, dry, and critical water years. Director Natoli asked for clarification regarding the distinctions among these categories, which Dr. Weinberger explained and noted were defined within the report. She added that although less than ten inches of precipitation occurred during the year, the year was classified as a dry year, not a critical year. She also explained that the gray line on the plot represents cumulative departure from the mean and is used to illustrate long-term precipitation trends.

Representative groundwater elevation graphs were also presented, showing that groundwater levels have generally increased since adoption of the GSP. All reported groundwater elevations remained above the measurable objective thresholds, indicating healthy basin conditions.

The 2025 Water Year chloride concentration data were displayed, showing concentrations below measurable objectives across all representative monitoring points. A Board member asked about consistently elevated chloride concentrations at Charnock Wells 19 and 20. Dr. Weinberger responded that localized variations in groundwater quality are not uncommon and may reflect different source waters or geologic conditions influencing those wells.

She concluded with a summary of GSP implementation projects during Water Year 2025, including:

1. Initiation of recharge from the Sustainable Water Infrastructure Project Advanced Water Treatment Facility to the Olympic Well Field in 2025;
2. Completion of the Olympic Well Field Restoration and Arcadia Water Treatment Plant Expansion Project in summer 2025;
3. Completion of construction of a second recharge well near the Olympic Well Field in 2026;
4. Coordination with the U.S. Geological Survey on development of a new monitoring well; and
5. Ongoing planning for development of a Salt and Nutrient Management Plan.

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No further discussion was had.

### **Public Comment on 7.D**

No public comments were received.

### **E. Update on the First Periodic Evaluation of the Groundwater Sustainability Plan**

Dr. Weinberger provided an overview of the first periodic evaluation of the GSP, beginning with a summary of the technical requirements. She explained that every five years, the GSA is required to submit a periodic evaluation report to DWR documenting the effectiveness of the GSP.

She reviewed the Water Use Changes and Associated Water Budget section of the report, which evaluates data collected since adoption of the GSP. She noted that reported groundwater production has varied by year but has not exceeded the estimated groundwater demand identified in the GSP. The analysis compares estimated total water use in the Santa Monica Subbasin before and after GSP adoption.

Dr. Weinberger explained that the Santa Monica Subbasin is highly urbanized and has not experienced land-use or cropping pattern changes that would significantly affect groundwater demand. She also noted that forecasted imported surface water supplies are derived from the draft Metropolitan Water District Urban Water Management Plan, which uses increasingly conservative assumptions and does not project supply beyond meeting existing demand levels.

She stated that the remaining task for the water budget analysis involves outreach to public agencies represented at the meeting, as well as private groundwater producers within the Subbasin, to determine whether any updates to groundwater use should be incorporated into the evaluation.

She also described the periodic evaluation requirements related to projects and management actions. The report will identify GSP projects and summarize progress toward implementation. Management actions highlighted included the Santa Monica Basin GSA's letter of support to investigate the feasibility of groundwater production wells near the Santa Monica Airport, development of a well metering ordinance, successful application for DWR grant funding, and ongoing planning for development of a Salt and Nutrient Management Plan.

A timeline showing ongoing GSP implementation activities and preparation of the first periodic evaluation was presented. Dr. Weinberger noted that staff anticipates completing a draft report for review by the end of the third quarter of 2026. Board review is expected to occur in early first quarter of 2027, after which staff would seek Board direction to submit the report to DWR.

### **Public Comment on 7.E**

No public comments were received.

### **F. Update on the Alternative Governance Structures Ad-Hoc Subcommittee**

Director Natoli provided an update on the Alternative Governance Structures Ad-Hoc Subcommittee. She noted that there was some initial uncertainty regarding continuation of the Ad-Hoc Subcommittee

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and its role. Director Natoli stated that, based on discussions to date, the member agencies are not in a position to change their existing governance positions, and no foreseeable changes to the current governance structure have been identified.

As a result, Director Natoli indicated that the Ad-Hoc Subcommittee does not recommend any changes to the existing governance framework at this time and recommended that the Ad-Hoc Subcommittee be dissolved.

It was noted that formal action to dissolve the Ad-Hoc Subcommittee would need to be agendaized for consideration at a future Board meeting.

### Public Comment on 7.F

No public comments were received.

## 8. Action Items

### A. Approve Standardized Email response for upcoming well permit applications

The Board considered approval of standardized email response templates related to coordination on upcoming well permit applications, as discussed earlier in the meeting.

#### 1a. Standardized Response for Groundwater Production Wells Within the Subbasin

The Board reviewed and revised the proposed template language to state:

...“To ensure the long-term sustainable use of groundwater resources in the Subbasin, please provide the requested information attached to this email and confirm that flow meters will be installed and metered extractions will be recorded. Failure to provide this information may cause a delay in the GSA providing a non-objection letter.”...

After incorporating the Board’s comments, **Chair Huynh** made a motion to approve the revised standardized response. **by Chair Huynh and Vice Chair Dishlip** seconded the motion. A roll-call vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

#### 1b. Follow-Up response for Groundwater Production Well Applications Within the Subbasin

The Board reviewed and revised the proposed language to state:

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“Thank you for your affirmative response to request for information sharing with the Santa Monica Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency (SMBGSA) and for the confirmation of the installation of flow meters. The SMBGSA has no objection to your well permit application”.

After incorporating the Board’s comments, **Chair Huynh** made a motion to approve the revised standardized response. **by Chair Huynh and Vice Chair Dishlip** seconded the motion. A roll-call vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

### 2. Standardized response for Monitoring Wells Within the Subbasin

The Board reviewed and revised the proposed language to state:

...“The SMBGSA welcomes additional monitoring well data for an improved understanding of the groundwater conditions in the Subbasin. Please provide this information to the SMBGSA annually.”...

After incorporating the Board’s comments, **Chair Huynh** made a motion to approve the revised standardized response. **by Chair Huynh and Vice Chair Dishlip** seconded the motion. A roll-call vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

### 3. Standardized response for Groundwater Well Applications Outside of the Subbasin

The Board reviewed and had no objection to the proposed language.

After incorporating the Board’s comments, **Chair Huynh** made a motion to approve the revised standardized response. **by Chair Huynh and Vice Chair Dishlip** seconded the motion. A roll-call vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

### 4. Standardized Response for Groundwater Monitoring Well Installation/Destruction

The Board reviewed the proposed language for the Groundwater Monitoring Well Applications within the Subbasin and determined that there would be a fifth standardized email response for the well destruction. This is a friendly amendment. From the template, the changes are as follows:

...“The destruction of the well for which you have submitted an application is located within the DWR defined boundaries of the Santa Monica Subbasin...”

After incorporating the Board’s comments, **Chair Huynh** made a motion to approve the revised standardized response. **Vice Chair Dishlip** seconded the motion. A roll-call vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

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**Public Comment on Item 8**

The board received no public comment.

**9. Solicitation of Items to be Discussed at the Next Regular Board Meeting**

The following item will be agendized: 1) The Dissolution of the Ad-Hoc Subcommittee.

**Public Comment on Item 9**

The board received no public comment.

**10. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 10:32 AM.