

DRAFT Minutes for the Santa Monica Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency – Special Meeting, July 16, 2025

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July 16 at 9:00 AM

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

Meeting Minutes

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 AM by Chair Wang.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

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

Chair Wang, City of Santa Monica

Quorum was determined

4. Disclosure of ex parte communications for board members

There was ex parte communication to disclose.

5. Consent Items

A. Approval of Minutes from April 16, 2025, Meeting

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

6. Public Forum

The board received public comments from Patricia McPherson and Margot Griswold.

7. Informational Items

A. Letters Submitted to DWR on the GSP Annual Reports

Dr. Weinberger provided an overview and timeline of four (4) Annual Reports that DWR has received from the GSA to date. She also discussed the letters received by DWR from commenters on the Santa Monica Basin GSA's most recent submittals of 2024 and 2025 Annual Reports. She indicated that in total, 5 letters of comment were received (for 2024 and 2025). These 5 comment letters are posted on DWR's public portal, they are also in the board packet and therefore are also on the GSA website. She summarized the general comments that the letters stated. Dr. Weinberger conveyed that all 5 comment letters received would be included in an appendix to the 1st Periodic Evaluation of the GSP which is due to DWR in January of 2027. The Periodic Evaluation will be discussed in greater detail at the next quarterly meeting.

Additionally, Dr. Weinberger explained that DWR provided a letter to City of Santa Monica on Friday, July 11, 2025. This letter was similar to previous letters received by the City from DWR on the Annual Reports and the GSA's compliance with SGMA and read into the record "that no further information or action is required at this time." Furthermore, Dr. Weinberger went on to read another section of the letter in the third (3rd) paragraph, specifically, "Following review of the 2024 annual report, the Department has determined that the GSP continues to be implemented in a manner consistent with achieving the Subbasin's sustainability goal, as described in the GSP. The Department reached this conclusion, based on a review of information in the annual report, any public comments submitted to the Department regarding this annual report and other relevant information regarding the subbasin conditions available to the Department." Dr. Weinberger also stated that the letter is signed by Paul Gosselin who is the Deputy Director for Sustainable Groundwater Management for DWR.

Chair Wang asked a clarifying question to ensure his understanding that DWR considered all the public comments that were attached to board packet, and they determined that the GSA is the complying with all regulations and managing the basin sustainably. Dr. Weinberger affirmed this understanding.

Public Comment on 7.A

The board received public comments from Patricia McPherson and Margot Griswold.

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B. Present criteria for basin boundary modification request evaluation (continued from April 16, 2025, meeting)

Dr. Weinberger provided a synopsis of the discussion related to basin boundary modifications that was had at the April meeting. Specifically, she summarized that basin boundary modifications had been conducted contemporaneously to GSA formations a number of years ago and she specified DWR had implemented a formal process at that time. She restated that DWR indicated that they had received queries from other GSAs and were looking at the possibility of opening a new round of basin modification requests, but did not currently have a timeline to do so. At the previous meeting, the GSA had requested additional information with regard to the types of basin boundary modifications. Dr. Weinberger summarized the types of basin boundary modifications, the process that DWR embarked on previously allowing either jurisdictional or scientific modifications as well as criteria used to make those determinations. The board asked questions related to the location and jurisdiction of any potential area that would be the subject of a future basin boundary modification request. These questions were answered by Dr. Weinberger.

Public Comment on 7.B

The board received public comments from Patricia McPherson and Margot Griswold.

C. Update on implementation cost sharing framework (continued from April 16, 2025, meeting)

Dr. Weinberger shared the following for the administrative cost share: 1) the GSA has signed agreements on implementation cost sharing from both the city of Culver City and the city of Beverly Hills; 2) the city of Santa Monica's agreement is awaiting signature by the new city manager; 3) both the County of Los Angeles and LADWP are waiting to agendize the administrative cost sharing agreement on their respective Board calendars and they expect signatures later in the year.

Discussion on the implementation cost share is still ongoing as there needs to be resolution on whether those costs would be borne by the pumpers in the basin, which requires metering data in order to determine the proportionate cost shares and setting up a framework.

Direction was provided to GSA staff to prepare estimated usages of pumper and it was also requested that Dudek and the GSA Secretary, Dr. Gold, begin reaching out to other agencies and pumpers on the basin to initiate conversations about rates/costs and usage. There was also a question on the legal authority that the GSA has to enforce pumping costs, which was directed to the attorneys who represent each GSA member agency.

Public Comment on 7.C

The board received public comment from Patricia McPherson.

D. Update from the Alternative Governance Structures Ad-Hoc Subcommittee

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There were no updates to share.

Public Comment on 7.D

No public comments were received.

8. Action Items

- A. Consider rescission of New or Replacement Groundwater Production Well Form and Well Installation Verification Procedures

Dr. Weinberger provided background on the item, which is that 2 years ago the GSA Board approved a well verification procedure along with a “New or Replacement” groundwater production well form that applicants would be required to fill out to request a consistency review for new groundwater production wells that would be drilled in the subbasin. This action was undertaken pursuant to an Executive Order and in 2024, the Governor issued another Executive Order, N-3-24 that rescinded two (2) previous executive orders. At the October 2024 Board meeting, the GSA Board requested a review of the well verification procedures in light of EO N-3-24. As the GSA’s well verification procedures specifically cited, EO N-3-24, in February of 2025, the GSA Board directed additional discussion to occur between Member agency attorneys.

Ms. Cola confirmed that the attorneys did meet and discuss this matter and that the recommendation from the attorneys is to consider rescission of a New or Replacement Groundwater Production Well Form because the executive order is no longer in effect, and the form is obsolete.

Public Comment on 8.A

No public comments were received.

There was a motion made by Chair Wang to rescind the well verification procedures and form and also to direct staff to return with an alternative so there would be an opportunity to remain involved with LA County on the number of well permits and potential impacts on the basin. The motion was seconded by Director Natoli. A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.

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

Director Natoli requested the following items to be agendized: 1) an update/summary of items in the GSP that the Board has committed to and need to be undertaken/addressed; 2) what the GSA has done to fill data gaps; 3) what DWR has requested the GSA provide/do; and 4) possible timeline for implementation of items 1-3. Chair Wang requested a status update on the seawater intrusion well and monitoring wells.

Public Comment on 9

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The board received public comment from Margot Griswold.

10. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:57 AM.

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