



San Bernardino Valley Water Conservation District

Helping Nature Store Our Water

Date: February 28, 2023

NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING AND HEARING RE GROUNDWATER CHARGE RATES TO ALL PERSONS INTERESTED IN GROUNDWATER PRODUCTION WITHIN THE BOUNDARIES OF THE SAN BERNARDINO VALLEY WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT:

The San Bernardino Valley Water Conservation District ("District") has completed the 2023 Engineering Investigation (EI) of the Bunker Hill Basin. The Draft EI was presented to the Board at its February 8th Board Meeting and will be presented to the Board for approval at its March 8th Board of Directors meeting to be held at the District Office at 1:30 p.m. This report is completed in connection with the Board of Directors' consideration of a groundwater charge on groundwater production within the Conservation District's boundaries. Article 1, Section 75560 of the California Water Code, requires that a water conservation district that proposes to levy or continue a groundwater extraction fee "...shall annually cause to be made an engineering investigation and report upon groundwater conditions of the District." A copy of the Conservation District's 2023 EI report is available for review online at the District's website at <http://www.sbvwd.org/reports-and-data/engineering-investigation.html> or at the District's office at 1630 West Redlands Blvd., Suite A, Redlands, CA. This notice is provided to advise all interested parties that District staff has recommended a rate increase of 11% for the upcoming water year in the base groundwater charge and a continued five-year phase in of the replenishment assessment component; the District's Board of Directors has approved this rate for noticing. The staff proposed unitary groundwater charge for 2023-2024 of \$16.95 per acre-foot (af) for all groundwater production. As requested by the San Bernardino Basin Groundwater Council ("Council"), the District is also considering an increase to the Replenishment/Sustainability component to the groundwater charge, to be imposed on entities subject to the District's Groundwater Charge that are not members of the Council. The Council supports phasing in this charge over several years. The proposed amount of such component is \$20.00 per acre foot, but for the upcoming water year is proposed at the phase-in rate of twelve dollars (\$12.00) per acre foot. The rates proposed pertain to municipal and non-municipal agricultural groundwater production from July 1, 2023-June 30, 2024. The groundwater charge is not imposed on a property basis, but rather is a per acre-foot charge, which relates directly to the amount of groundwater produced from wells overlying the groundwater basin within the Conservation District's boundaries. Consequently, the ultimate amount of groundwater charge to be paid by individual operators cannot be precisely identified now, because it will depend directly upon the amount of groundwater produced in the basin from July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024. The estimated total amount of revenues from the groundwater charge is approximately \$1,565,182, based on estimated production of 97,429 acre feet for the 2023-24 water year. The total amount of revenues from the sustainability component is \$61,044 [\$12 times the estimated production from non-GC members in the District of 5087 acre feet]. The groundwater charge is collected on a semi-annual basis, based on production statements operators submit for their groundwater production. The District uses the proceeds of the groundwater charge to fund ongoing groundwater replenishment of the basin, including direct water recharge, facility operations repairs and maintenance, and related costs. A public meeting and public hearing on the proposed groundwater charge will be held in the Conservation District's

1630 W. Redlands Blvd, Suite A
Redlands, CA 92373
Phone: 909.793.2503
Fax: 909.793.0188
www.sbvwd.org Email: info@sbvwd.org

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Board Room located at 1630 West Redlands Blvd., Suite A, Redlands, CA 92373. The date and time for the public meeting will be April 12, 2023, at 1:30 pm. The date and time of the public hearing will be held on April 26, 2023, at 1:30 pm. The District will also be asked on April 26, 2023 to make a finding that the imposition of the groundwater charge is exempt from CEQA, under title 14, C.C.R. Sections 15273, 15301, and 15306. You are invited to attend the public meeting and public hearing, and may submit any objection or protest you may have to the charge, or any evidence concerning groundwater conditions, water supplies of the Conservation District, rates, the CEQA exemption findings, or any matter relating to the proposed groundwater charge. You may also submit such matters to the District in writing any time at or before the 1:30 pm scheduled time of the Public Hearing on April 26, 2023, by providing such written communication to the District's Administrative Specialist, Athena Laroche, at the address given above, for hard copies, or for digital transmissions, to athena@sbvwcd.org. Late submissions will not be considered. Please be advised that in any later judicial or other action challenging the groundwater charge, you may be limited to those grounds raised either in writing or in person prior to the close of the public hearing, and the administrative record of the proceedings on the consideration of the charge. Please also be advised that pursuant to California Government Code section 53759 and other provisions of law, there is a 120-day statute of limitations for challenging any new, increased, or extended fee or charge, including the District's proposed groundwater charge covered in this notice. Further inquiries regarding the report or the groundwater charge, or requests for further documents or information, may be directed to Betsy Miller at 1630 West Redlands Blvd., Suite A, Redlands, CA 92373, or by telephone at (909) 793-2503.