

RESOLUTION NO. 2026-03

A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF CUYAMA BASIN GROUNDWATER SUSTAINABILITY AGENCY SETTING ITS GROUNDWATER EXTRACTION FEE AGAINST ALL PERSONS OPERATING GROUNDWATER EXTRACTION FACILITIES WITHIN THE CUYAMA BASIN

WHEREAS, pursuant to the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA), Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSA) are authorized to collect regulatory fees (Wat. Code, § 10730); and

WHEREAS, SGMA authorizes a GSA to impose fees and increase those fees to fund the cost of a groundwater sustainability program, including the preparation, adoption and amendment of a groundwater sustainability plan (GSP), and investigations, compliance assistance, enforcement, and program administration, including a prudent reserve; and

WHEREAS, the types of fees that can be imposed include fees on groundwater extraction; and

WHEREAS, on November 6, 2019, pursuant to Water Code section 10730, the Board of Directors (Board) of the Cuyama Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency (Agency) authorized the imposition of a \$19 per acre foot groundwater extraction fee; and

WHEREAS, on August 13, 2020, pursuant to Water Code section 10730, the Board authorized the increase of the existing \$19 per acre foot groundwater extraction fee to \$44 per acre foot; and

WHEREAS, on May 5, 2021, the Board authorized the reduction of the existing \$44 per acre foot groundwater extraction fee to \$39 per acre foot; and

WHEREAS, on May 4, 2022, the Board again authorized the reduction of the groundwater extraction fee to \$38 per acre foot; and

WHEREAS, on May 3, 2023, the Board again authorized the reduction of the groundwater extraction fee to \$12 per acre foot; and

WHEREAS, on May 1, 2024, the Board again authorized the reduction of the groundwater extraction fee to \$5 per acre foot; and

WHEREAS, on May 22, 2025, the Board again authorized the groundwater extraction fee to \$5 per acre foot; and

WHEREAS, the Agency has prepared and made available to the public a Fiscal Year 2026-2027 Groundwater Extraction Fee Report (Report), which is attached as **Exhibit A** and incorporated herein by reference; and

WHEREAS, the Agency gave notice concerning the proposed fee as follows:

1. By posting a notice on the Agency's website at www.cuyamabasin.org.
2. By publishing a notice in The Santa Maria Times of the public fee hearing on June 11, 2026 and June 18, 2026.
3. The notices included: (i) the time and place of the hearing; (ii) a general explanation of the fee under consideration; and (iii) a statement that the data on which the fee is based is publicly available.
4. By posting the data upon which the fee is based in the form of the Report on the Agency's website at www.cuyamabasin.org.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Directors of Cuyama Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency that a groundwater extraction fee shall be set as follows:

1. A \$6 [no greater than \$20 per acre-foot] per acre foot groundwater extraction fee shall be set and levied on all groundwater extracted from within the Agency boundary. Commercial water users using 1.5 acre feet or less in a year per well and domestic water users using 2.0 acre feet or less in a year per well are deemed to be de minimis users and exempt from this fee.

2. The Report is approved and adopted, and Agency staff is directed to comply with its provisions.

3. The Board makes the following findings, based upon the testimony and evidence (including exhibits) presented at the public hearing on the fee reduction:

(a) Revenues derived from the groundwater extraction fee will not exceed the costs of Agency's groundwater sustainability program.

(b) Revenues derived from the groundwater extraction fee shall not be used for any purpose other than that for which the groundwater extraction fee is imposed.

PASSED, APPROVED, AND ADOPTED this 1st day of July 2026.

Steve Jackson
Steve Jackson (Jul 9, 2026 13:48:39 PDT)

Steve Jackson, Board Chair

ATTEST:

Taylor Blakslee

Taylor Blakslee
Executive Director



FY 2026-2027 GROUNDWATER EXTRACTION FEE REPORT

CUYAMA BASIN GROUNDWATER SUSTAINABILITY AGENCY

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SECTION 1 – ACRONYMS

AF	Acre-feet
CBGSA	Cuyama Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency
GSA	Groundwater Sustainability Agency
GSP	Groundwater Sustainability Plan
SGMA	Sustainable Groundwater Management Act

SECTION 2 – DEFINITIONS

De Minimis User – *Commercial*

Uses 1.5 acre-feet or less in a year per well. De minimis users do not have to pay a fee.

De Minimis User – *Domestic (Non-Commercial)*

Uses 2 acre-feet or less in a year per well. De minimis users do not have to pay a fee.

SECTION 3 – CUYAMA BASIN GROUNDWATER SUSTAINABILITY AGENCY BACKGROUND

The Cuyama Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency (CBGSA) was formed in 2017 under the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) to develop and implement a Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP). The purpose of the GSP is to achieve groundwater sustainability for the Cuyama Basin by 2040. The CBGSA is governed by an 11-member board with representatives from the four counties that intersect the Basin (Kern, Santa Barbara, San Luis Obispo, and Ventura), the Cuyama Community Services District, and the Cuyama Basin Water District.

SECTION 4 – ESTABLISHING A FEE

Water Code section 10730 authorizes Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs) to establish a groundwater extraction fee to fund, among other things, the costs of a groundwater management program, including administration of a GSP. The CBGSA has set the fee over the Fiscal Year 2026-2027 period and is based on (i) the CBGSA’s draft budget and cash flow for Fiscal Year 2026-2027; and (ii) 2025 water use.

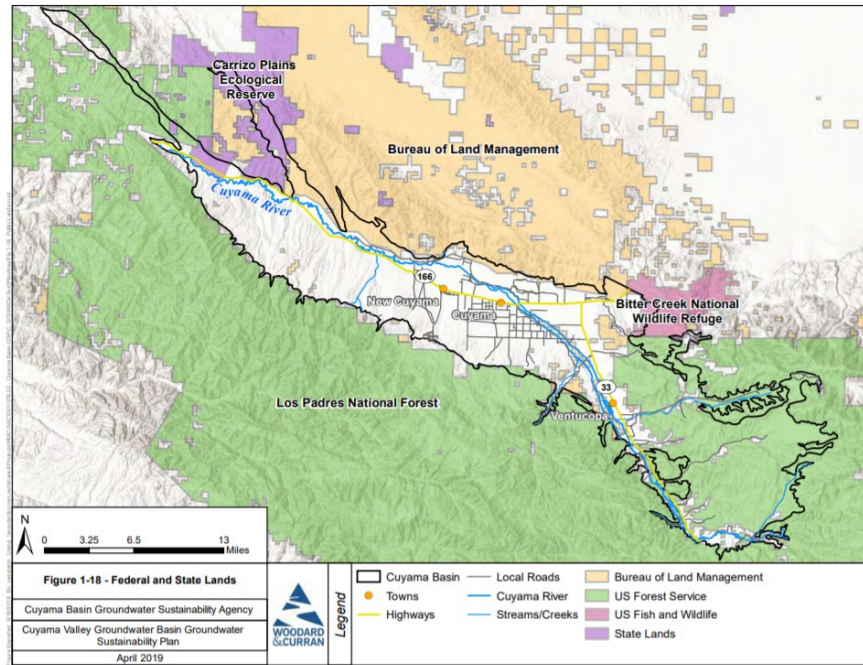
Section 4.1 – Definition of an “Extractor”

An extractor is defined as a pumper of groundwater within the Cuyama Basin groundwater basin boundary as defined by California Department of Water Resources’ Bulletin 118 (see Figure 1 below). The below groups are not considered extractors:

Exclusions:

- De minimis users – Wells that use 1.5 acre-feet or less per year for commercial purposes, or wells that use less than 2 acre-feet per year for residential purposes. De minimis users do not have to pay a fee, either because they are statutorily exempt (residential) or because the cost of collection exceeds the value of the fee (commercial).
- State and federal lands – Non-commercial water use on State and federal lands. Well use on State and federal lands do not have to pay a fee because there is no documented groundwater consumption on these lands.

FIGURE 1 – GROUNDWATER BASIN IN CUYAMA



Section 4.2 – Fee Basis

The proposed groundwater extraction fee is based on the CBGSA’s fiscal year budget and cash flow. The budget and cash flow for Fiscal Year 2026-2027 was presented and adopted at the May 6, 2026 regular meeting of the CBGSA Board of Directors. The approved budget for Fiscal Year 2026-2027 totals \$1,514,700 and is attached hereto as Exhibit “A.”

Calendar year 2025 water use was based on self-reported water use from one of the following two sources:

- (1) Metered data, or
- (2) In the absence of metered data, consumptive water use estimates based on evapotranspiration crop factors developed by the Cal Poly Irrigation Training & Research Center (ITRC) as shown in Forms I and M included as Exhibit B which include a conversion factor to estimate the gross water use consistent with the metered data reporting methodology.

The 2025 reported basin-wide groundwater use totals 34,219 acre-feet.

Fee Recommendation

Based on (1) the Fiscal Year 2026-2027 budget and projected year end cash balance, and (2) user-reported 2025 water use data, the CBGSA recommends the basin-wide groundwater extraction fee be set at not greater than \$20 per acre-foot.

Section 5 – ADMINISTRATION OF FEE

Section 5.1 – Invoices

Invoices and instructions for payment will be sent to water users in July 2026 and will be based on the 2025 water use previously reported by Cuyama extractors. If payments are not received by the due date of August 30, 2026, a past due notice will be mailed in July 2026 and late penalties will apply (see section 6 below).

Section 5.2 – Schedule/Reporting period

The below schedule outlines the groundwater extraction fee process:

May 6, 2026	Fiscal Year Budget Adopted
July 1, 2026	Public Meeting to Establish a Fee
July 15, 2026	Invoices are Distributed
August 30, 2026	Payment Due Date
September 1, 2026	Late penalties assessed (10% and then 1% per month until fees placed on tax roll)

SECTION 6 – PENALTIES

Well owners will be charged a 10 percent penalty for any payments postmarked after the August 30, 2026 due date, and the principle and penalty will accrue interest at the rate of 1 percent per month from and after September 1, 2026 until payment is made in full by the landowner. Fees that remain unpaid will be placed on the tax roll.

Exhibit A

FISCAL YEAR 2026-2027 BUDGET

Approved May 6, 2026

CBGSA FISCAL YEAR 2026-2027 BUDGET

CATEGORY		Adopted 2026-27 Budget
A HALLMARK GROUP		
1	CBGSA Board and SAC Meetings	\$ 111,700
2	GSP Implementation	\$ 55,000
3	Response to DWR on Amended GSP	\$ 6,875
4	Groundwater Extraction Fee and Allocation Management	
4.1	Annual Groundwater Extraction Reporting & Fee	\$ 14,100
4.2	CMA Groundwater Allocation Implementation & Management	\$ 9,400
5	Financial Information Coordination	\$ 40,000
6	Outreach	\$ 16,500
7	Adjudication Coordination/Support	\$ 15,100
	Subtotal	\$ 268,675
B LEGAL		
1	General Legal Counsel	\$ 145,310
2	Adjudication Legal Counsel	\$ 184,140
	Subtotal	\$ 329,450
C ADMIN		
1	Audit (FY 26-27)	\$ 12,000
2	Insurance (D&O, General Liability)	\$ 23,600
3	California Association of Mutual Water Co. Membership	\$ 200
4	2026 Updated Parcel Data	\$ 4,000
5	CIMIS Station (Annual O&M)	\$ 14,000
6	Mail house (Noticing)	\$ 6,000
7	Contingency	\$ 20,000
	Subtotal	\$ 79,800
D WOODARD & CURRAN & TECHNICAL		
1	Stakeholder/Board and Outreach Engagement Support	
1.1	SAC meetings	\$ 21,525
1.2	Board meetings	\$ 47,205
1.3	Tech Forum calls	\$ 10,515
1.4	Public Workshops	\$ 5,000
1.5	General Outreach	\$ 9,700
1.6	Website Updates - Maintenance / Hosting	\$ 7,714
2	Model Improvements	
2.1	Incorporate SBCF Investigation Findings Into Model	\$ 63,360
3	GSP Implementation Support	
3.1	GSP Implementation Program Management	\$ 62,830
3.2	GW Levels and GWQ Monitoring Network Coordination and Data Mgmt	\$ 29,350
3.3	Support for CBGSA response to DWR and public comments on 2025 GSP	\$ 51,710
3.4	Support for Adaptive Management of Groundwater Levels	\$ 26,580
3.5	Prepare Annual Report for Cuyama Basin	\$ 55,580
3.6	Develop Approach for ISW Analysis	\$ 7,840
3.7	Assess Water Quality Data Collection Approach	\$ 7,260
4	Pumping Allocation and Water Use Analysis Support	
4.1	CMA: Allocation Exchange Support	\$ 1,490
4.2	CMA: Carryover Policy Support	\$ 1,730
4.3	Detailed Assessment of Increased Water Use	\$ 27,630
5	Improve Understanding of Basin Water Use	
5.1	Perform Annual Land Use Survey (Land IQ and Local Reporting)	\$ 48,245
5.2	Develop Opti DMS tool for local landowner use reporting and processing	\$ 14,290
6	As-Needed Technical Tasks	
6.1	Preparation of grant proposal	\$ 48,310
6.2	Support for DWR Technical Services (TSS)	\$ 10,760
7	Adjudication Support (if Required)	\$ 45,000
	Subtotal	\$ 603,624
E OTHER TECHNICAL		
1	Quarterly GW Levels and Piezometer Monitoring (Contractor TBD)	\$ 50,000
2	Annual WQ Monitoring (Contractor TBD)	\$ 30,000
3	Annual Stream Gauge Maintenance (USGS)	\$ 53,200
	Subtotal	\$ 133,200
F OTHER LEGAL		
1	Adjudication contingency (subpoenas, depositions, pleadings, etc.)***	\$ 100,000
	TOTAL	\$ 1,514,700

Exhibit B

CROP FACTORS



Form I IRRIGATOR

WATER USE ESTIMATE WORKSHEET – 2025
Cuyama Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency

Name _____
Billing Address _____
Phone / Email _____

Instructions:

1. For 2025, input crop name(s)¹ in column A, the parcels those acres are farmed on in column B, the irrigated acres in column C, and the corresponding crop factors from the attached Exhibit C-1 in column D.
2. Multiply acres (column C) by the crop factor (column D) and input result in column E.
3. Total the acre-feet from column E in row 2.
4. Convert net water use (from row 2) to gross water use by multiplying total acre-feet from row 2, column E by the gross factor in row 3, column E and insert in row 4, column E.

	A	B	C		D		E
	Crop Name	Assessor Parcel Number(s) (APN) ²	Acres		Crop Factor		Water Use (acre-feet)
1				X		=	
				X		=	
				X		=	
				X		=	
				X		=	
				X		=	
				X		=	
				X		=	
				X		=	
				X		=	
				X		=	
2	Total Acre-feet (sum column E)						
3	Gross Conversion Factor						1.52
4	Total Gross Water Use						

¹If you have metered water use that is less than the crop factors, you can report metered water use.

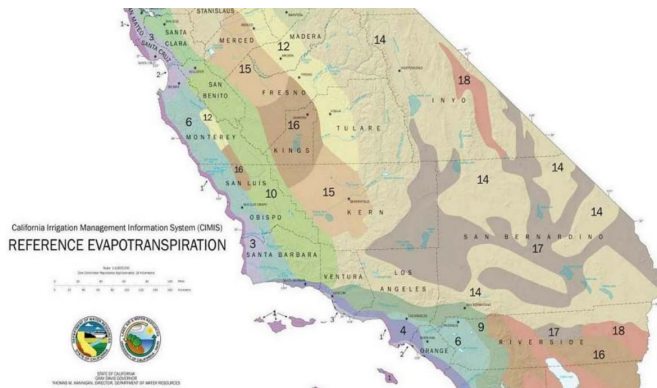
²Cropping location information may be provided separately from this form. Please contact Grace Bianchi at 559-218-3482, or gbianchi@hgcpm.com for any questions.

Exhibit I-1 – Crop Factors

Source Information

Crop Factors are evapotranspiration (ET) values from California Polytechnic State University's Irrigation Training and Research Center (ITRC) California Crop and Soil Evapotranspiration Report (Crop Report), ITRC Report No. R 03-001 accessible at www.itrc.org/reports/pdf/californiacrop.pdf.

The below values were calculated using ET reference averages for zone 10 from the Crop Report (see below figure).



Avg Annual Reference ET by Zone (inches/yr)

Zone	Total
1	33.0"
2	39.0"
3	46.3"
4	45.5"
5	43.9"
6	49.7"
7	43.4"
8	49.4"
9	55.1"
10	49.1"
11	53.0"
12	53.3"
13	54.3"
14	57.0"
15	57.0"
16	62.5"
17	66.5"
18	71.3"

Crop Factors

Crop	ET	Crop	ET
Alfalfa Hay	4.02	Melon, Radish, Squash, & Cucumbers	1.62
Alfalfa Seed, Sudan	3.60	Olives, Mature	3.27
Almonds	3.32	Olives, Deficit	2.58
Apples ¹ (Drip)	2.50	Onions and Garlic	1.99
Apples, Pear, Cherry, Plum, and Prune	3.33	Permanent Pasture	3.93
Barley Wheat, Oats	1.97	Pistachios	2.99
Blackeyed Peas	1.97	Potatoes	3.00
Carrots	2.20	Rootstock	2.23
Corn	2.43	Sorghum Grain	2.43
Cotton	2.70	Sugar Beets	2.70
Citrus	3.45	Tomatoes	2.20
Grapes with 40% cover crop	1.56	Walnuts	3.53
Grapes with 60% cover crop	2.02	Cannabis ²	TBD
Grapes with 100% cover crop	2.24	Hemp ³	TBD
Lettuce	2.20		

¹Value determined by local expertise in the Cuyama Valley.

²Value based on ____.

³Value based on ____.