

June 28, 2017

Mr. Mark Nordberg, GSA Project Manager
Senior Engineering Geologist
California Department of Water Resources
901 P Street, Room 213-B
P.O. Box 942836
Sacramento, CA 94236

Subject: Notice of Decision to Serve as a Groundwater Sustainability Agency for Portions of the South American Subbasin

Dear Mr. Nordberg,

Reclamation District No. 551 (“District”) provides this notice of its decision to serve as a Groundwater Sustainability Agency (“GSA”) pursuant to California Water Code § 10723.8. The District intends to undertake sustainable groundwater management of the South American groundwater basin, part of the Sacramento Valley Basin (DWR Basin No. 5-021.65) located within the Reclamation District’s existing service area in Sacramento County. A map and shapefile showing the Basin boundaries and proposed area of the GSA is also attached as an Exhibit to this letter.

The District is a California Reclamation District formed and operating under the provisions of the Water Code § 50000, et seq. Under this law, the District provides water delivery, drainage, and water management functions within its service area. As a California Reclamation District, RD 551 qualifies as an eligible agency for the purposes of GSA formation under the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (“SGMA”).

The District is located outside of the proposed boundaries of the Sacramento Central Groundwater Authority but possibly within the Alternative Plan area proposed by that entity. If this Alternative is not approved by DWR, a groundwater sustainability plan (“GSP”) will be required. In any event, the District will cooperatively work with this local agency as well as other local stakeholders to resolve any GSA overlap and establish a suitable governance structure for the entire subbasin in order to achieve groundwater sustainability.

In June the District held a public hearing to solicit input on the potential to become a GSA and to consider its decision to serve as a GSA for the portions of the groundwater basin within its boundaries. Notice of this hearing was published in *The Sacramento Bee*, a paper of general circulation in the Basin, as required by Water Code § 10723 and Government Code § 6066. This notice is included as an Exhibit to this letter. Furthermore, an agenda was posted at the meeting place more than 24 hours prior to the District’s meeting pursuant to the Brown Act (Government Code § 54954 et seq.). At this meeting the District adopted a resolution form a GSA. No other bylaws, regulations, or ordinances relevant to SGMA have been adopted at this time.

While RD 551 is currently forming an independent GSA, the Reclamation District is interested in joining with several other independent GSAs in the surrounding region to form the Northern Delta GSA, which

would facilitate collaborative management the local groundwater resources. If this option is pursued, the GSAs would likely enter into Memorandum of Agreement as contemplated by California Water Code § 10723.6. The specific makeup of this collaborative GSA, both in terms of the member GSAs and management structure, is being formulated at this time. RD 551 will take all necessary steps in order to realize this cooperative GSA and communicate with DWR staff to ensure effective coordination.

The District has communicated with parties interested in the sustainable management of groundwater within the Basin and will actively engage with, and solicit feedback from, those parties as the Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) is developed. As required by Water Code § 10723.8(a)(4), the District will consider the interests of all beneficial uses and users of groundwater, as well as those responsible for developing GSPs. These interests include, but are not limited to the following:

- ***Holders of overlying groundwater rights:***
 - *Agricultural users:* The Basin area is composed almost entirely of agricultural users, most of whom have an existing relationship with the District. The District will communicate with the landowners to guarantee that they understand their on-going opportunity to participate in the development of a GSP for the Basin, should a GSP be pursued.
 - *Domestic well owners:* There are domestic wells within the GSA. The District will communicate with these landowners to guarantee that they understand their on-going opportunity to participate in the development of a GSP for the Basin.
- ***Municipal Well Operators:*** The GSA's management area includes the town of Courtland and the District will communicate with all municipal water users and their respective agency or system during the development of a GSP in order to solicit feedback from those stakeholders. The District will collaborate with neighboring GSAs and Sacramento County regarding municipal well operations in the South American Subbasin to ensure coordination with those entities concerning municipal well operations.
- ***Public Water Systems:*** The District will work directly with public water systems within the GSA relying on groundwater supplies. The District has not identified any public water systems within its boundaries but will work with Sacramento County and the State Water Resources Control Board to identify any public water systems that could be affected by SGMA implementation.
- ***Local land use planning agencies:***
 - *Sacramento:* The District has communicated with the County related to its intention to serve as a GSA for the portions of the basin within the District's boundaries. The District will continue to communicate with and solicit feedback from the County throughout the GSP development and implementation process.
 - *Other Water, Irrigation, and Reclamation Districts outside of the GSA Boundaries:* The District has communicated with neighboring local resource agencies in the Basin as a courtesy. The District will continue to communicate with, solicit feedback from, and foster cooperation among the neighboring agencies throughout the GSP development and implementation process.

- ***North Delta Water Agency:*** This Agency, formed by a special act of the California Legislature, represents northern Delta interests to assure the lands within its boundaries receive a dependable water supply to meet current and future needs. The District has communicated with the North Delta Water Agency regarding that entity's decision not to become a GSA. RD 551 will continue to communicate with this entity during the GSP formation process.
- ***Environmental users of groundwater:*** n/a. The District will cooperate with any environmental users of groundwater in developing a GSP should such users arise.
- ***Surface water users, if a hydrological connection between surface water and groundwater resources exists:*** The District will coordinate with local surface water users to ensure their interests are considered during the GSP development and implementation process.
- ***The federal government, including, but not limited to, the military and managers of federal lands:*** n/a. There are no federal lands within the District's GSA boundaries. In the event that a federal entity acquires lands within the District's boundaries, the GSA will cooperate with that entity in the formation and implementation of a GSP.
- ***California Native American tribes:*** n/a. There are no identified Native American tribes within the District's proposed GSA boundaries. Nevertheless, the District will coordinate with the appropriate state and federal agencies to ensure the interests of any tribes are represented.
- ***Disadvantaged communities, including, but not limited to, those served by private domestic wells or small community water systems:*** n/a. The District has not identified disadvantaged communities within the basin using DWR's web-based tools. Even still, the District will cooperate with Sacramento County to work with any disadvantaged communities within the basin relying on groundwater supplies in order to protect that group's interests.
- ***Entities listed in Water Code § 10927 that are monitoring and reporting groundwater elevations in all or part of the groundwater basin managed by the GSA:*** The Sacramento Central Groundwater Authority is currently the CASGEM monitoring entity within the basin. District will coordinate with that entity as well as any other entities within the basin that collect groundwater data in order to coordinate with those entities regarding the GSP.

The District and other stakeholders' roles and responsibilities will be further defined in the GSP. The District welcomes feedback throughout this process from the state and any other agencies, organizations, or persons that have a vested interest in the management of this groundwater basin. If the Department of Water Resources requires any additional information, please contact lindavls@citlink.net or the undersigned at (916) 668-7345 or email at erik@thefreshwatertrust.org.

Thank You,

Erik Ringelberg