

Kings River East GSA Meeting – GSA Minutes

DATE: July 16, 2015

TIME: 2:00PM

LOCATION: ALTA ID, 289 North L St, Dinuba CA

ATTENDANCE: Chris Kapheim, Alta ID
Norman Waldner, Alta ID
Buddy Mendes, Fresno County
Augustine C. Ramirez, Fresno County
Alan Weaver, Fresno County
Dean Uota, City of Dinuba
Nicole Zieba, City of Reedley
Jim Wegley, Keller/Wegley, Engineer
Doug Jensen, Baker, Manock & Jensen
Kristin Dobbins, Community Water Center
Michael Prado, SCSD/AGUA
Dennis Mills, Kings CWD
Tricia Blattler, Tulare County Farm Bureau
Paul Adams, Booth Ranches

Welcome:

Chris Kapheim welcomed everyone

Approval of Minutes of last meeting (6/18/15)

There were no objections to the minutes presented,

Additions to the Agenda:

There were no additions to the Agenda

Interested Parties:

Status of the Kings River East GSA MOU

Chris Kapheim reviewed the current signed the MOU and those still pending.

Status of the Kings River East GSA

Chris Kapheim commented that on Monday, July 13, 2015, one day prior to the July 14, 2015 scheduled hearing, Perea was becoming nervous about the bill. There was a possibility of the bill being pulled from the hearing. He explained that the Kings River opposition along with Nisei Farmers League caused the concern. Kapheim did suggest to Perea's staff that if the bill is to be pulled, it should be July 13, 2015, prior to 3:00 p.m. to provide adequate notice to the participants. Kapheim was emailed the morning of the hearing that AB 1135 was pulled.

Tricia Blattler asked what made Perea nervous about the bill.

Chris Kapheim said two things need to be in a place in order to be in compliance with groundwater legislation that was enacted into law last year. First, a groundwater sustainability agency (“GSA”) needs to be filed with the State by 2017; second, a groundwater sustainability plan (“GSP”) submitted to the State in 2020.

Chris Kapheim stated concerns that other groups have with our GSA. Other agencies west of the Kings River believe that AB1135 impacts them. Many were asking for our bill to be made into a two-year bill. As a result of the missed hearing, our bill will become a two-year bill. Furthermore, some districts have concerns with including drinking water agencies into the process.

Nicole Zieba stated that we can still move forward with the King River East GSA even though we don’t have a legislative GSA.

Chris Kapheim said there are 3 types of GSA’s: 1. MOU’s (tend to lack certainty). 2. JPA’s- issue with Ag representation (Ag is not a local agency) 3. Legislative GSA’s-7 person vote plan, that incorporated the drinking water groups, caused the Kings River to oppose the GSA. Alta accounts for both urban and Ag. We recognize that Ag is a big player and need Ag support. Alta didn’t feel it would be possible to initiate a plan without the support of cities, drinking water agencies and agriculture.

Norman Waldner asked about the Kings River having an issue with the Ag vote.

Chris Kapheim clarified that initially the Kings River had an issue with the Ag vote but believes giving a vote to the drinking water agencies caused much of the concern.

Chris Kapheim thanked all the agencies for their letters of support. There was only 1 opposition letter.

Nicole Zieba expressed her dislike on how one phone call undid the collaborative efforts of 14 agencies. She would like to see a possible JPA being established.

Chris Kapheim stated that pulling the bill at the last minute caused an inconvenience to persons who made arrangements to attend the hearing. A face-to-face meeting with Perea will be requested. As a group, we worked hard to make this GSA work. In meeting with Assembly- person Perea, discussion on the willingness to move forward next year needs to be determined.

Chris Kapheim said we all have to do things we don’t like. At the end of the day, the basin will have to coordinate. We have a good product and strong issues. Water quality issues will not be going away. Other parties felt our GSA would be getting in their way; several agencies felt we were much further along the process than they were.

Kings Basin Coordination

Tricia Blattler asked if the Kings River offered an alternative. She also stated that other meetings she was questioned about what this GSA was doing; also about defining who Ag is.

Chris Kapheim said production Ag would be represented.

Doug Jensen stated there won’t be a GSA that will cover the whole basin.

Buddy Mendes stated this GSA has different issues. The problem is how to connect all the interests into a basin approach.

Nicole Zieba asked if we have to support a basin-wide JPA.

Dennis Mills stated that there has been talk of agencies trying to coordinate GSA's under a possible JPA.

Chris Kapheim said that other agencies have water supply issues. The Kings River East GSA has numerous water quality and groundwater supply issues. We need a coordination agreement where we can focus on the positive things and not get in each other's way. This isn't a unique issue.

Dennis Mills said if it can work in Kern County it can work for this GSA. It's a matter of wanting to make it work.

Chris Kapheim stated we have to respect each other's issues. The State is watching how we are working together. We always have known that a coordination agreement is required when there are multiple GSA's in a sub-basin.

Nicole Zieba asked who would carry the gavel. We need to continue with the GSA and do what we need to do and also focus on coordination.

Buddy Mendes said we need to have autonomy. A JPA is more of a confederation rather than a union.

Chris Kapheim explained why Ag representation is important. It's an Ag area. If Ag is represented there is a chance they will support us. We need to get the best possible Ag representation.

Doug Jensen said because we wanted to have a private entity, such as agriculture, we would need legislative support. If successful, others might be scared they would have to do the same thing.

Buddy Mendes asked about having a separate basin.

Chris Kapheim explained initially that was the plan to create a separate basin but, the counties said they would not agree. Therefore, a second MOU was created. It's in our best interest that we can all work together. As a result, AB 1135 does not create a separate sub-basin for the Kings River East GSA.

Nicole Zieba stated since we have all signed the MOU can we just package it and send it to the State.

Dennis Mills said if we submitted our GSA to the State as is, it would set things in motion; it can make more problems.

Chris Kapheim said our GSA is farther ahead than other groups.

Buddy Mendes said a meeting needs to be set up to coordinate with KRCD, Fresno County and FID and CID. Boundary issues will also need to be addressed.

Chris Kapheim said we need to focus on the issues that will ensure state compliance.

Doug Jensen said bill or no bill, the stakeholder process is still here. What is this GSA going to be? JPA? One Entity? We still have the same issues. What can we do the next 6 months? Will this be one agency or several agencies?

Chris Kapheim stated we need to put the pieces back together and concern ourselves with the State's objectives. We still need a series of solutions. We need to look at how we are going to finance ourselves.

Nicole Zieba asked what would've been the next step if the bill would've passed.

Chris Kapheim said the financing of the plan, developing funding, bringing in technical experts. The focus needs to be on the plan and implementation.

Buddy Mendes stated that we need to move forward and not have an over reliance on KRCD.

Chris Kapheim said different areas have different issues.

Buddy Mendes said some irrigation districts don't care about drinking water issues.

Chris Kapheim stated we need to get things started right away. We will leave it to Buddy to call the meeting with KRCD, Fresno County, FID, CID and us. Chris will meet with Perea and discuss the bill.

Boundary Issues

Dean Uota asked about the initial opposition this GSA had in the beginning. He also asked if the West Kings thought that Kings River East GSA was trying to break away from the rest of the basin was factor.

Chris Kapheim stated the original intent was to have a JPA with four water agencies.

Nicole Zieba stated others believe that we want to move away from the basin but that is simply not the case.

Tricia Blattler said in a Kaweah meeting, people there were saying Kings River East plan was DOA!

Nicole Zieba said we are all on the same page. We need to go on the next step and move forward.

Chris Kapheim said we need to start the coordination process with the remainder of the basin. We also need to look at proposition 26 and see how that comes into play.

Doug Jensen asked for all the agencies to create a list of their major issues that need to be addressed.

Chris Kapheim stated a coordination meeting will be set up; fences need to be mended.

Dennis Mills said to set up a time frame and push for the meeting with the other agencies in the basin.

Alan Weaver stated Alta has taken the lead. It's important for all the other agencies to make a list of their issues to be addressed. It serves 2 purposes and helps the GSA move forward.

Other Items of Discussion

Nicole Zieba stated that a well in Reedley tested positive for TCP. The plumes are moving in faster especially due to the drought. Also new and additional water conservation requirements are being implemented. The State is looking at total production and constantly moving the compliance targets.

Dennis Mills said the cities of Tulare, Visalia and Tulare Irrigation District (TID) are forming their own GSA. There are a lot of issues associated with this. Essentially once a group steps out and leads they become a target.

Tricia Blattler said there have been landowner meetings and many people are nervous about the possible Tulare, Visalia, TID GSA.

Doug Jensen said all the GSA's will have to coordinate with the neighboring GSA's. They will all end up having similar plans.

Michael Pardo said there are two items he wanted to bring up. The first being, POM Wonderful/Wonderful pistachio drilled a well in Sultana across from the school. He was told it was initially 330 feet deep but he has also been hearing that the well goes as deep as 1200-1500 feet deep. He is seeking more information. Second, he mentioned the issue of a landowner who has been pumping water and selling it to someone in Los Angeles.

Dennis Mills stated the sale of water in such a way is illegal.

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