

Paso Robles Area Groundwater Authority Board of Directors Regular Meeting

March 25, 2026

Meeting Minutes

Present:

Matt Turrentine, *Chair*
Hilary Graves, *Vice Chair*
John Hamon
Bruce Gibson

Shandon-San Juan Water District GSA
Estrella-El Pomar-Creston Water District GSA
City of Paso Robles GSA
County of San Luis Obispo

Staff:

Claire Collins, Legal Counsel
Taylor Blakslee, Interim Executive Director

1. **Call to Order**

Paso Robles Area Groundwater Authority (PRAGA) Chair Matt Turrentine called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

2. **Pledge of Allegiance**

The pledge of allegiance was led by Chair Turrentine.

3. **Roll Call**

Mr. Blakslee called roll (shown above).

4. **Meeting Protocols**

Mr. Blakslee provided an overview of the meeting protocols.

5. **Consent Agenda**

Mr. Blakslee reported that the February 18, 2026, minutes and January and February 2026 financial reports were included in the consent agenda.

There were no public comments on this item.

MOTION

Director Hamon motioned to approve the consent agenda. The motion was seconded by Director Gibson and it passed unanimously.

6. **Executive Director Report**

Mr. Blakslee provided a report on the March 12, 2026, Public Workshop and shared general feedback received.

Chair Turrentine opened the floor for public comments.

Public Comments: Greg Grewal.

Chair Turrentine closed the floor for public comments.

7. Action Items

a. Approval of the Fiscal Year 2026-2027 Budget

Mr. Blakslee presented the draft compliance budget and summarized stakeholder feedback from the March 12 workshop. He explained that the budget reflects minimum compliance requirements and noted the removal of domestic well mitigation program costs due to continued grant funding.

Director Gibson commented that the domestic well impact mitigation program is continuing under a county-held grant that funds it at a level slightly higher than the ~\$50,000 previously budgeted.

Chair Turrentine opened the floor for public comments.

Public Comments: Greg Grewal, Murray Powell.

Chair Turrentine closed the floor for public comments.

MOTION

Director Gibson motioned to approve the Fiscal Year 2026-2027 Budget. Director Graves seconded the motion. A roll call was made and the motion passed unanimously.

AYES: Gibson, Graves, Hamon, Turrentine
NOES: None
ABSTAIN: None
RECUSE: None

b. Direction on Prop 26 Components in Development of a Fee for Fiscal Year 2026-2027

Mr. Blakslee provided an overview of previous board direction to implement a Prop 26 fee for Fiscal Year 2026-2027. He added that staff recommends a volumetric, ET-based approach using January through December 2025 Land IQ data for agriculture.

Ryan Aston, SCI Consulting, explained the Prop 26 fee process, including fee study development, public notice requirements, and Board adoption. He described potential fee structures, stakeholder feedback, and recommended a volumetric approach for proportionality.

Director Graves requested clarification on the \$10,000 estimate attributed to de minimis user benefits and asked how the calculation was derived. Mr. Aston responded that the estimate is based on a small percentage of total basin use and is preliminary pending a full fee study.

Legal Counsel Collins stated the estimate reflects approximately 1% of total basin use and emphasized the need to maintain proportionality under Prop 26.

Mr. Aston stated there is no comparable dataset to Land IQ for domestic users and that estimates are typically based on average use patterns. Legal Counsel Collins noted that further refinement of de minimis estimates would increase costs with limited benefit due to the small scale of use.

Director Hamon expressed concern about fairness if de minimis users receive benefits without directly paying fees. Director Gibson supported the staff recommendation not to directly charge de minimis users and emphasized administrative efficiency and minimal cost impact.

Mr. Aston clarified that staff recommends a 30-day public review period for water use data. He explained that data would be made available for parcel-level review and that a process would be developed for submitting documentation to support any requested corrections.

Director Gibson asked whether individual agricultural users would be able to review their projected water use. Mr. Blakslee confirmed that parcel-level data would be publicly available and that stakeholders would be notified and given an opportunity to review and provide feedback.

Director Graves stated she only supports the approach as a one-year solution and emphasized the need to refine methodology moving forward. She questioned how de minimis users represent a small portion of pumping given their large share of parcels and requested clarification on the number of landowners subject to fees.

Mr. Aston responded that agricultural use represents the majority of basin pumping and drives the overall proportional allocation, and that the fee study would further refine these estimates.

Director Hamon asked what would be required to improve accuracy of de minimis use estimates. Mr. Aston stated that improved accuracy would require additional data collection efforts, which may not be cost-effective given the relatively small share of total use.

Chair Turrentine opened the floor for public comments.

Public Comments: Dean Porter, Greg Grewal, Murray Powell, Steve Carter.

Chair Turrentine closed the floor for public comments.

Director Gibson stated that using prior-year data is a common practice and emphasized the importance of a fair and accessible variance process to address inaccuracies or changed conditions.

Chair Turrentine noted Land IQ provides a reasonable estimate for proportional allocation and that a variance process will address inaccuracies.

Legal Counsel Collins stated that the proposed approach is consistent with standard methodologies used in other basins and meets legal requirements for proportionality under Proposition 26.

Director Graves raised concerns about equity and suggested further evaluation of alternative fee structures, including hybrid approaches, in the future.

The Board provided general direction to proceed with staff recommendations, including:

- Charging agricultural, public water system, and commercial groundwater users.
- Accounting for de minimis users without directly charging them.
- Advancing a volumetric fee structure for further development.
- Supporting use of the county tax roll for fee collection.

c. Approval of Paso Robles Subbasin Water Year 2025 Annual Report

Mr. Blakslee provided an overview of the annual report timeline.

Nate Page, Confluence Engineering, presented key findings and highlights of the Water Year 2025 Annual Report.

Chair Turrentine opened the floor for public comments.

Public Comments: Greg Grewal, Murray Powell.

Director Gibson stated the report should address minimum threshold exceedances and evaluate impacts of agricultural changes on basin sustainability.

MOTION

Director Hamon motioned to approve the Paso Robles Subbasin Water Year 2025 Annual Report and submit to DWR by April 1st. The motion was seconded by Director Gibson and it passed unanimously.

9. Public Comments – Items not on the Agenda

Chair Turrentine opened the floor for public comments.

Public Comments: Greg Grewal, Murray Powell.

10. Director Comments / Future Agenda

Chair Turrentine requested an overview of the fallowed land program in April.

11. Upcoming Meetings

Mr. Blakslee reported that scheduled meeting is on April 22, 2026,

Adjourn at 6:18 a.m.

Drafted by: Grace Bianchi, Hallmark Group