

**UPDATE ON OWENS VALLEY  
GROUNDWATER AUTHORITY ACTIVITIES  
AND REQUEST OF TRI-VALLEY  
GROUNDWATER MANAGEMENT  
DISTRICT FOR MONO COUNTY TO  
WITHDRAW**

Wendy Sugimura & Michael Draper, Community Development Department  
Stacey Simon & Jason Canger, County Counsel's Office

# SGMA & OVGA History

- ▶ In 2014, the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) enacted
  - ▶ Requires basins rated high- and medium-priorities to form GSAs and prepare GSPs; or else risk “state intervention”
  - ▶ Owens Valley Groundwater Basin (Basin) rated medium-priority basin by DWR
- ▶ In 2017, Inyo and Mono local governments and public agencies discuss forming GSA
- ▶ Inyo County prepares draft joint powers agreement (JPA); Mono County submits changes and comments aimed at ensuring Mono County citizens have adequate representation in decisions affecting them; these were rejected
- ▶ 13 local governments and public agencies execute JPA to form OVGA
- ▶ In 2018, OVGA awarded DWR grant to prepare GSP for Basin; hires consultant; begins preparing GSP
- ▶ In 2019, DWR rerates Basin as a low-priority
  - ▶ No SGMA requirement to form GSA or prepare GSP for Basin AND no “state intervention”
  - ▶ Several agencies withdraw from OVGA (including TriValley and Wheeler Crest)
  - ▶ Mono County remains OVGA member; commits to GSP “preparation”

# Recent & Current OVGA Activities

- ▶ In 2019, after the withdrawal of several agencies, OVGA decides to continue with GSP prep
- ▶ Consultant continues to prepare GSP
  - ▶ Collects groundwater and other data from public agencies
  - ▶ Presentations on preliminary data and GSP prep process to OVGA board
- ▶ In 2020, OVGA adds Owens Valley Committee (envt'l org) and Lone Paiute Shoshone Tribe (tribal gov) to OVGA board of directors as interested parties
- ▶ Consultant continues to prepare GSP
  - ▶ Begin discussing undesirable results and sustainability criteria
- ▶ Preparation of Community/Stakeholder Engagement Plan
  - ▶ Required by SGMA
  - ▶ Still determining how to conduct outreach to communities and stakeholders
- ▶ Consultant continues to prepare GSP

# Recent TriValley Activities & Request to Withdraw

- ▶ In 2019, TriValley withdraws from OVGA after DWR rerates Basin a low-priority
  - ▶ Low priority means SGMA GSA and GSP requirements no longer apply; no state intervention
- ▶ In 2020, TriValley begins process of regaining its GSA status
- ▶ Remains concerned about OVGA regulation of groundwater extraction and use if GSP implemented and enforced
  - ▶ Especially by OVGA that is not accountable to TriValley citizens and residents
  - ▶ May adversely affect agricultural activities/operations in TriValley
- ▶ Requests Mono County withdraw from OVGA
  - ▶ Withdrawal protects Mono County (including TriValley) from OVGA implementation/enforcement of GSP

# Implications of County Withdrawal

- ▶ GSP will be required if Basin related high- or medium-priority; avoid state intervention
- 1. Remain OVGA Member & Withdraw Once GSP Prepared
  - ▶ County to continue to represent Mono County interests and provide comments during GSP prep based on concerns of Mono County, citizens, residents
  - ▶ Evaluate final GSP and then decide to remain/withdraw from OVGA
  - ▶ Withdrawal prevents OVGA implementation/enforcement of GSP in Mono County
- 2. Withdraw from OVGA Immediately
  - ▶ Prevents County from participating and influencing GSP “from the inside”
  - ▶ Eliminates possibility of GSP implementation/enforcement in Mono County
  - ▶ Does not mean no GSA for Mono portion of Basin; Mono County and its local public agencies can form GSA and coordinate with OVGA GSP
- 3. Remain an OVGA Member
  - ▶ Final GSP may be implemented/enforced in Mono County (including TriValley)
  - ▶ OVGA not accountable to Mono County citizens and residents

# Staffing Issues

- ▶ Both Remaining and Withdrawing options raise staffing issues
- ▶ County Remains OVGA Member
  - ▶ Continued Community Development Dept staffing related to GSP review and preparation and Community/Stakeholder Engagement Plan implementation
  - ▶ Ongoing County Counsel Office staffing of OVGA board meetings and administration, GSP review and preparation, governance issues
- ▶ County Withdraws from OVGA
  - ▶ Community Development Dept and County Counsel Office staffing of “Mono County GSA” - formation, board administration, governance
  - ▶ “Mono County” GSP preparation and possible implementation

# QUESTIONS