



# County of Santa Cruz

## Water Advisory Commission

701 Ocean Street, Room 312, Santa Cruz, CA 95060  
(831) 454-2022 TDD/TTY -Call 711 [www.scceh.com](http://www.scceh.com)  
[EnvironmentalHealth@santacruzcounty.us](mailto:EnvironmentalHealth@santacruzcounty.us)



### AGENDA

#### SANTA CRUZ COUNTY WATER ADVISORY COMMISSION

**Wednesday June 12, 2024, 4pm**

This meeting will be held in hybrid format. Commissioners are expected to attend in person.  
In-Person: 701 Ocean Street; **Fifth Floor Redwood Room**

Remote via Teams: [Join the meeting now](#) Meeting ID: 260 429 498 529 Passcode: MHAE8Y

**Dial in by phone** +1 831-454-2222 Phone conference ID: 421 621 538#

**A. OPENING**

1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call

**B. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS**

Opportunity for the public to comment on items under the purview of the Water Advisory Commission but not on today's agenda.

**C. CONSENT AGENDA**

Items on the consent agenda are considered to be routine in nature and will be acted upon in one motion. Specific items may be removed by members of the advisory body or public for separate consideration and discussion. Routine items that will be found on the consent agenda are meeting minutes, drought response updates, and Groundwater Sustainability Agency updates.

1. Approval of Meeting Minutes for April 3, 2024
2. Update from Groundwater Sustainability Agencies
3. Revised WAC Meeting Schedule for 2024

**D. COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS**

Opportunity for Commissioners to provide brief updates

**E. STAFF REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Opportunity for staff to provide brief updates

**F. NEW BUSINESS**

1. Well Water Quality Testing Program

Presentation by Sean Abbey about the new well water quality testing program.

Attachments: Staff report

2. Water Advisory Commission Work Plan

Consider taking action to prepare an updated Work Plan

Attachments: Staff report

2022-2023 Work Plan

Process for Updating Work Plan

**G. UNFINISHED BUSINESS and UPDATES**

1. Well Ordinance Update Status

Update on activities since the last WAC meeting. Proposal to turn the August Water Advisory Commission Meeting into a public workshop.

Attachments: Staff report (link to TAC materials is provided)

**H. CORRESPONDENCE**

Letter from Becky Steinbruner dated April 27, 2024

Letter from Becky Steinbruner dated May 23, 2024

Letter from Becky Steinbruner dated June 1, 2024

**I. BOARD OF SUPERVISORS ACTION ON ITEMS AFFECTING WATER:**

April 30, 2024

[DOC-2024-328 : Direct the Chair to send letters to elected officials and agencies at the State requesting thorough analyses of the State's past oversight of Big Basin Water Company \(District 5 - Supervisor McPherson\)](#)

[Letter of Paul Lego, Water Advisory Commission - Support for General Services Department Grant Application for the Rountree Water System](#)

May 14, 2024

[DOC-2024-417 : Consider report on the Climate Action and Adaptation Plan \(CAAP\) Accountability & Measurement System, and take related actions \(Office of Response, Recovery and Resilience\)](#)

June 4, 2024

[DOC-2024-436 : Approve Proposition 1 Round 2 Integrated Regional Water Management Local Project Sponsor Agreement for the Drinking Water Treatment System and](#)

Secondary Water Source Project at the Rountree Facility, and take related actions (General Services Department) Approved By Consent Vote [Unanimous]

**J. ITEMS OF INTEREST**

- Summary of changes to PFAS regulations provided by Commissioner Pereyra (attached)
- Lawyers to Plastics Makers: Prepare for 'Astronomical' PFAS Lawsuits  
<https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/28/climate/pfas-forever-chemicals-industry-lawsuits.html?smid=nytcore-android-share>
- <https://pressbanner.com/free-water-testing-available-for-santa-cruz-county-individuals-with-household-wells/>

**K. AGENDA ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS**

**L. ADJOURNMENT**



# County of Santa Cruz

## Water Advisory Commission

701 Ocean Street, Room 312, Santa Cruz, CA 95060  
(831) 454-2022 TDD/TTY -Call 711 [www.scceh.com](http://www.scceh.com)  
[EnvironmentalHealth@santacruzcounty.us](mailto:EnvironmentalHealth@santacruzcounty.us)



### Minutes

## SANTA CRUZ COUNTY WATER ADVISORY COMMISSION

**Wednesday April 3, 2024, 4pm**

This meeting was held in hybrid format.

### A. **OPENING**

1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call

Present: Cheap, Largay (arrives 4:13), Lego, Lockwood, Pereyra, Wilson

Absent with notification: Gillespie

Staff: Sierra Ryan, Kevin Harmon, Megan Reilly, Michael Beaton

### 3. Elections of Officers as outlined in Santa Cruz County Code 2.38.120:

- (1) Commission officers shall be elected during the commission's first meeting after the commission is established at which a majority of the members are present. Annually, thereafter, commission officers shall be elected during the first meeting in April, or if the commission does not meet in April, at the next subsequent meeting. Commission officers may serve for up to two consecutive years and shall be eligible to serve again after a one- year "sit-out" period.

Cheap nominated Lego for Chair, seconded by Pereyra

All in favor, Lego abstains

Lego nominated Cheap for Vice Chair, seconded by Pereyra

All in favor, Cheap abstains

### Item F1 PFAS in the County \*Item moved up due to time constraints of guest Speakers\*

Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) have been found in water sampled in a few locations in the County. General Services will provide an update on their project to remedy the problems at the Sheriff's Rehab well which services the Rountree facility. Commissioner Pereyra will share findings from his research.

Moved item FI up. Introduce Megan Reilly and Michael Beaton from the General Services Department (GSD), the operators of the Rountree Facility well.

Commissioner Pereyra gave a summary of where PFAS has been reported to be present in Santa Cruz County. The first PFAS was Scotchguard. It is mapped at four locations so far in the County. There is ongoing testing every 2 months at the Buena Vista Migrant Center (BVMC). They are not over the legal limit, though any amount of PFAS can have health implications. There is a proposal to make the drinking water limit 4 ppt, which several locations within the County do exceed.

GSD handles utilities, fleet, building management, and a water well at the Rountree correctional facility. 160 inmates, 70-80 staff and the Hope Services building. In 1999, Environmental Health came out to look at the site and they have made a lot of improvements. In 2020 they started testing the well and found that it did have PFAS contamination. There were no regulations at that time, though in 2021 the State began required notification. Concentrations are not currently high enough to legally require treatment. They have notified the inmates, Hope Services, and the Board of Supervisors.

GSD had an engineer design a treatment system to eliminate the PFAS and PFOA to below the notification levels. May also benefit Chrome 6. It's an ion exchange project. There will be filters that need to be changed frequently. They use 3.6 million gallons of water per year. Looked at alternatives including new well and intertie but decided to do treatment. They are looking into doing an intertie with the BVMC so they can just use one system and share in the maintenance. The landfill also has a well but they could do an interconnection there as well. They got an IRWM grant for \$800k to address the problem. At the migrant center, the ground is owned by the County, has a lease with the Housing Authority of the County of Santa Cruz and is currently operated by the Housing Authority of Stanislaus County, who would be responsible for the water quality issues. Once the Board has approved the grant, GSD will reach out to the HASC to discuss partnerships.

Lego asks if they are participating in the PFAS lawsuit, Michael says yes.

Pereyra says that everything is going to the landfill and will continue to contaminate the landfill further. Paul asks what the County is doing about it at the landfill, but that is operated by a different County department. Cheap asks if they are providing bottled water – Mr. Beaton says he believes they are not currently because they are only in exceedance of the notification level, but still well below the action stage. Cheap asks about possible interties with other utilities, Mr. Beaton says they have had high level conversations with Watsonville and will discuss further as part of the feasibility study. This will be one of the first ion exchange systems.

Rooting out the sources is important – there is an airport upgradient and Ms. Reilly believes the State is studying it.

Public comment by Ms. Steinbruner: support the writing of a letter of support for the grant, wants there to be offered bottled water and notification to the users of the water and that the notification be bilingual. Wants to see monitoring of ag wells nearby to see if they have PFAS. Soquel Creek had looked into ion exchange for chrome 6. This issue is also being watched by the Regional Board.

Commissioner Pereyra requested a copy of the notification

Commissioner Pereyra makes a motion that the Commission Chair submit a letter of support for the work of GSD and the Grant, and recommends considering bottled water in the interim. Paul seconds. Unanimous.

Sludge from wastewater treatment plants may also be a concern in the future.

Commissioner Pereyra plans to reach out to Supervisors Friend and Hernandez to discuss this issue and the migrant center.

**B. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS**

Opportunity for the public to comment on items under the purview of the Water Advisory Commission but not on today's agenda.

None.

**C. CONSENT AGENDA**

Items on the consent agenda are considered to be routine in nature and will be acted upon in one motion. Specific items may be removed by members of the advisory body or public for separate consideration and discussion. Routine items that will be found on the consent agenda are meeting minutes, drought response updates, and Groundwater Sustainability Agency updates.

1. Approval of Meeting Minutes for February 7, 2024
2. Update on County Drought Response
3. Update from Groundwater Sustainability Agencies
4. WAC Meeting Schedule for 2024

Lego moves, seconded by Pereyra, unanimously approved.

**D. COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS – Postponed till after F2**  
Opportunity for Commissioners to provide brief updates

**E. STAFF REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS – Postponed**  
Opportunity for staff to provide brief updates

**F. NEW BUSINESS**

1. PFAS in the County  
Moved up in the agenda

2. Santa Cruz County Safe Drinking Water, Clean Beaches, Wildfire Risk Reduction and Wildlife Protection Act.

Eric Lombardo attends representing the campaign. Largay clarifies that he will be speaking to this issue as a staff person from the Conservation Director at the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County (LTSCC). Presentation given on behalf of the campaign and not the Land Trust. The idea is to collect local funds that can be leveraged for state and federal grants. Ballot measure will raise \$7-\$8 million per year countywide, which is a drop in the bucket. It's seed money and will not solve our problems alone.

Lockwood asks if the Cities will all receive the same amount of money – that is being negotiated and will be based on per capita.

Campaign is still gathering signatures, working on sharing information right now.

Wilson – I thought you needed a 2/3 vote.

Mr. Lombardo – There was a change in 2021 that said that special taxes put on the ballot by the voters only needs a simple majority. Referred to as Upland Decision.

Cheap – It's a really diluted message – all things to all people. There could be confusion with the general public, have you done any polling? Largay – the core message is to give diffuse power to a few sections of government who do distribute the funds to a number of different partners. Hopefully people will see opportunity there. Mr. Lombardo says that they have done polling that suggests that this could be successful.

Largay – the local fire districts are worried that the perception from the public is that this will solve the fire problem and they won't want to vote to support the local fire district, who need much more money. There are not currently any fire district tax funds that they know of on the ballot. Also sympathetic that this won't solve all water resource problems especially supply.

Public comment from Ms. Steinbruner– did the County come to the land trust to do this? I read that the tax collector will get 1% off the top and Parks and OR3 will get 5% of the administrative tax. There will be other tax initiatives on the ballot. The advisory panel will be a 9-member body that can set the 5-year plan. This will likely require a consultant. Land acquisitions is another concern. It seems like the Land Trust is guaranteed some of the money.

1. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS and UPDATES** -

Commission Restructuring Update

Staff has revised the Commission Code and Bylaws based on comments received from the Commissioners at the February 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting, and from County Counsel.

Lockwood had a question about the subcommittees, it does not reference the maximum number of commissioners

Lego moves they approve the changes in substantially the same form. Seconded by Bryan Largay. Unanimous.

2. Well Ordinance Update Status

Update on activities since the last WAC meeting

Attachment: GW Supply Challenge Areas

The topics of concern of the order of magnitude, focus on the big problems and not spending limited county resources on small potatoes. No Action.

**G. CORRESPONDENCE**

No Discussion

**H. BOARD OF SUPERVISORS ACTION ON ITEMS AFFECTING WATER:**

No Discussion

**I. ITEMS OF INTEREST**

No Discussion

**J. AGENDA ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS**

Well ordinance

Workplan

**K. ADJOURNMENT 6:02**





# County of Santa Cruz

## Water Advisory Commission

701 Ocean Street, Room 312, Santa Cruz, CA 95060  
(831) 454-2022 TDD/TTY -Call 711 [www.scceh.com](http://www.scceh.com)  
[EnvironmentalHealth@santacruzcounty.us](mailto:EnvironmentalHealth@santacruzcounty.us)



**Subject:** June 12, 2024 Water Advisory Commission Consent Agenda

**Title:** Groundwater Sustainability Agency Updates

### **Background**

There are three groundwater basins in the County subject to the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act. The following updates come from the Groundwater Sustainability Agencies tasked with managing and monitoring those basins.

### **Pajaro Valley Water Management Agency**

- In May, the PV Water Board held a public hearing on its proposed budget for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2025. Following the public hearing, the Board voted in favor of approving the final budget. In other actions, the Board approved proposed budget amendments for the current fiscal year; approved engagement with financial auditors for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024; approved a water awareness project with the Santa Cruz County Fairgrounds Foundation; and approved actions related to Watsonville Slough System Managed Aquifer Recharge & Recovery Project: Amendment to Agreement with EKI Water & Environment, Inc. for Recovery Well and Monitoring Well Support Services, in an Amount Not to Exceed \$44,900, and Agreement with Piini Realty for Property Appraisal Services in an amount not to exceed \$32,500. The regularly scheduled Board meeting in June is cancelled in observance of the Juneteenth holiday.
- Work on the College Lake Integrated Resources Management Project continues to progress. Traffic impacts due to the construction of the 6-mile Treated Water Pipeline are occurring in the area of Main Street and Riverside Road, where approximately 1,500 feet of pipeline remain to be constructed.
- Design of the Watsonville Slough System Managed Aquifer Recharge & Recovery Project has reached the 60% complete milestone.

### **Santa Margarita Groundwater Agency**

- The Santa Margarita Board met on February 29<sup>th</sup>. The Board:
  - Received an update on the ongoing groundwater sustainability program.
  - Received the Water Year 2023 Annual Report for the basin and authorized its submittal to the Department of Water Resources.
  - Received a preliminary budget estimate for Fiscal Year 2025.
  - Reappointed its 2 private and 1 alternate well owner representatives.
- The Agency recently made updates to its website to improve public access to basin monitoring data (<https://www.smgwa.org/BasinMonitoring>).
- The Agency will meet again on May 23<sup>rd</sup>.

## **Santa Cruz Mid-County Groundwater Agency**

- The Mid-County Board met on March 21<sup>st</sup>. The Board:
  - Received an update and provided direction on a policy to implement a well registration, metering, and reporting program for non-de minimis users of groundwater in the basin.
  - Received an update and provided direction on the required Plan Evaluation of the Groundwater Sustainability Plan. The Agency is expected to receive a draft of the Plan Evaluation by June 1<sup>st</sup>.
  - Received an update on preliminary findings of a seawater intrusion investigation in the Seascape area of the basin. Additional investigation is being planned to further define the problem.
  - Received the Water Year 2023 Annual Report for the basin and authorized its submittal to the Department of Water Resources.
  - Received a preliminary budget estimate for Fiscal Year 2025.
- The Agency will meet again on June 20<sup>th</sup>.

By: Sierra Ryan, Water Resources Program Manager



# County of Santa Cruz

## Water Advisory Commission

701 Ocean Street, Room 312, Santa Cruz, CA 95060  
(831) 454-2022 TDD/TTY -Call 711 [www.scceh.com](http://www.scceh.com)  
[EnvironmentalHealth@santacruzcounty.us](mailto:EnvironmentalHealth@santacruzcounty.us)



**Subject:** Revised Water Advisory Commission Schedule for 2024

The Santa Cruz County Water Advisory Commission Meetings for 2024 are as follows:

February 7, 2024  
April 3, 2024  
June 12, 2024  
August 7, 2024  
October 2, 2024  
December 4, 2024

By: Sierra Ryan

Water Resources Program Manager



# County of Santa Cruz

## Water Advisory Commission

701 Ocean Street, Room 312, Santa Cruz, CA 95060  
(831) 454-2022 TDD/TTY -Call 711 [www.scceh.com](http://www.scceh.com)  
[EnvironmentalHealth@santacruzcounty.us](mailto:EnvironmentalHealth@santacruzcounty.us)



**Subject:** June 12, 2024 Water Advisory Commission Regular Agenda

**Title:** Drought Response & Outreach Plan (DROP) Update

### Background

On September 23, 2021, Senate Bill (SB) 552 was signed into law. SB 552 requires that “a county shall establish a standing county drought and water shortage task force to facilitate drought and water shortage preparedness for state small water systems and domestic wells within the county’s jurisdiction”. The Water Advisory Commission voted to adopt the responsibility for implementing SB 552 and receives quarterly updates on the progress of implementation.

[Senate Bill 552 Compliance \(scceh.org\)](http://scceh.org)

### Updates:

- County and State staff continue to collaborate on outreach related to the free well testing program. Outreach completed to date include a press release by the County, articles in the Pajaronian, Aptos Times and Press Banner, a segment in Supervisor Hernandez’s newsletter, posts on the Health Services Agency social media accounts, and distribution of fliers and posters to community gathering locations in South County.
- To date, there are currently 85 confirmed applicants to the State’s free well testing program. The first round of testing is expected to begin in early June.
- County Staff was able to coordinate with the State’s well testing contractor, Tetra-tech, to simultaneously collect samples that would inform decisions on the installation of a treatment device.
- Well owners that are found to have exceedances will be directed to County staff for information and, for income qualified residents, support services.
- A purchase order is in place for bottled water, POU installation, and water hauling. All services will be available when the state testing program begins and before we begin receiving applications for assistance.

- The Private Well Support webpage has been updated in several ways and is now called the [Household Well Assistance](#) web page. The page now links to the State's Free Well Testing enrollment page and has digitally fillable applications for the County's Water Quality Assistance Services
- The week of June 3<sup>rd</sup>, mailers containing enrollment information for the State's Free Well Testing program will be sent to households that are on a mail route with a high proportion of households served by a well and in an area of water quality concern. There are two routes north of Watsonville and one route in the Bonny Doon area.
- In July, County Staff will meet with Community Water Center to receive training on door-to-door outreach, which will includes assistance in visiting several neighborhoods of interest in south county.
- Sierra Ryan continues to represent interests of local government at the State [Drought Response Interagency Partnership \(DRIP\) Collaborative](#).

By: Sean Abbey

Water Quality Specialist.



# County of Santa Cruz

## Water Advisory Commission

701 Ocean Street, Room 312, Santa Cruz, CA 95060  
(831) 454-2022 TDD/TTY -Call 711 [www.scceh.com](http://www.scceh.com)  
[EnvironmentalHealth@santacruzcounty.us](mailto:EnvironmentalHealth@santacruzcounty.us)



**Subject:** June 12, 2024 Water Advisory Commission Regular Agenda

**Title:** Water Advisory Commission Work Plan Update

**Recommended Action:** Create a subcommittee of no more than three Commissioners to lead the development of an update to the Work Plan.

### **Background:**

At the April 2022 Water Advisory Commission Meeting, the Commission adopted a two-year work plan as well as a process to update the Work Plan in the future. Since that time, there has been some turnover in Commissioners as well as agreed-upon (though not yet formally adopted) changes to the Powers and Duties of the Commission.

### **Updates:**

As the Commission is now operating beyond the end-date of the previous Work Plan, and some of the duties have been changed, it is time to consider a revision to the Work Plan. The 2022-2023 update made significant changes from the previous version, however it is likely that many of those changes are still relevant and that this update will be less time-intensive. The attached Process document provides guidance on considerations while updating the Work Plan.

The new Powers and Duties which should be incorporated into the work plan are as follows:

- Advise the Board of Supervisors on all matters relating to water policy.
- Recommend policies to the Board of Supervisors to ensure that the production of water and the development of additional water supplies are consistent with the growth management program and the General Plan of Santa Cruz County.
- Recommend to the Board of Supervisors any policies necessary to protect surface water, groundwater, and recreational resources of Santa Cruz County.

- Facilitate drought and water shortage preparedness for state small water systems and domestic wells within Santa Cruz County.
- Provide opportunities for coordinating and communicating with the state and other local governments, community-based organizations, local water suppliers, and local residents on a regular basis and during drought or water shortage emergencies.
- Undertake other duties relating to water resources, as requested by the Board of Supervisors.

Staff is recommending a subcommittee lead the work of the update and present initial changes to the Commission at the August WAC meeting.

By: Sierra Ryan



# County of Santa Cruz

---

## Water Advisory Commission

701 Ocean Street, Room 312 ❖ Santa Cruz, CA 95060

(831) 454-2022 ❖ Fax (831) 454-3128

<https://scceh.com/Home/Programs/WaterResources/WaterAdvisoryCommission.aspx>

## 2022 -2023 Work Plan

### January 2022

#### **OVERVIEW**

Consistent with its bylaws, the Water Advisory Commission (WAC) will focus on priority water resource related issues, policies and projects, with the intent of taking one or more of the following actions:

- Advise the Board of Supervisors (BOS) on issues related to water resources.
- Work cooperatively with county departments, other county commissions, public and private agencies, and concerned members of the public, to formulate advice to the BOS.
- Serve as an information clearinghouse to the BOS and other County commissions.
- Advise the BOS on potential areas of cooperation with other public and private agencies and organizations.
- Provide a public forum to educate the WAC and the community.
- Support the work of County staff in implementing water resource programs.
- Monitor and evaluate implementation of key policies and programs and advise the BOS as needed.
- Proactively identify water resource issues of concern that are not being addressed by other advisory bodies to the BOS.

#### **BACKGROUND**

The Water Advisory Commission (Commission) was established in 1975 to serve as a policy advisory body to the Board of Supervisors (Board) on issues relating to the use and protection of the county's water resources. The Commission consists of seven members, five of whom are concerned citizens appointed by individual supervisors and two that are appointed at large. The two at large positions represent public water purveyors (200 or more connections) and private or mutual water companies (five to 199 connections) in the County. The Environmental Health Services (EHS) Division of the Health Services Agency provides staff support for the Commission. In January 2022, Sierra Ryan, Water Resources Manager, is serving as lead staff.

Staffing, funding, and other resources available to the Commission necessarily limit the duties and responsibilities of the Commission. Therefore, the Commission utilizes discretion in devoting time to those activities that are most important to achieving its overall goal of



enhancing and preserving Santa Cruz County water resources. County departments (Planning, EHS, and Public Works (DPW) will assist the Commission in its work, by including the Commission in water related correspondence, and by having staff provide timely oral reports on pending issues. For more information about the Commission visit its webpage: <https://sceeh.com/Home/Programs/WaterResources/WaterAdvisoryCommission.aspx>

## **PRIORITY ISSUES**

### **1. SUSTAINABLE GROUNDWATER MANAGEMENT**

#### **Background**

The Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA), codified at Water Code §§10720 et seq., requires that groundwater basins form Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs) by 2015 and develop and implement plans to achieve sustainability. Santa Cruz County includes several groundwater basins as identified by the California Department of Water Resources, some of which are high priority and managed; others are low priority and not managed, [click here for a map viewer](#). Groundwater basins in the county managed by a GSA include the Santa Margarita Basin, the Santa Cruz Mid-County Basin, and the Corralitos Basin.

From north to south, the three GSAs that exist within the County are: the [Santa Margarita Groundwater Agency](#) (est. 2015), the [Santa Cruz Mid-County Groundwater Agency](#) (est. 2015), and the [Pajaro Valley Water Management Agency](#) (est. 1984). The County, while not a water purveyor, is involved in each of the three GSAs, either directly via a joint powers authority, or indirectly by means of committee-level participation. The County has the responsibility of reviewing and approving well permit applications, and many domestic wells as well as small state systems are located in unincorporated Santa Cruz County.

SGMA defines a sustainable groundwater basin as one that is not experiencing:

- Significant and unreasonable chronic lowering of groundwater levels indicating a depletion of supply
- Significant and unreasonable reduction of groundwater storage
- Significant and unreasonable seawater intrusion
- Significant and unreasonable degradation of groundwater quality
- Significant and unreasonable land subsidence
- Depletions of interconnected surface water that have significant and unreasonable adverse impacts on beneficial uses of the surface water

#### **WAC Role**

The WAC should maintain a focus on the issues of sustainable groundwater management, support regional supply planning efforts (especially in regard to developing conjunctive use and groundwater recharge opportunities), proactively engage the BOS in advancing support for sustainable regional water supply alternatives as they emerge, and advise the BOS as appropriate. The WAC should receive, review, and potentially accept regular reports from County staff and/or representatives from GSAs and the water purveyors within the County.

## 2. DROUGHT AND CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACTS ON WATER RESOURCES

### Background

[California's Fourth Climate Change Assessment, Central Coast Region Report](#) (Langridge, 2018) states, *“The Central Coast Region is notable for its extensive natural ecosystems, many of which will be impacted by climate change. Hardwood forests, scrublands, and herbaceous grasslands comprise most of its land cover, with significantly less intensive agriculture and small-to medium-sized cities in the region. There is a strong demand for development in rural areas and agriculture is being developed on lands formerly supporting grazing or natural vegetation. The region continues to reflect an economic and social disconnect between prosperous coastal communities and agricultural areas with many low-income farm workers, inequalities that may result in disadvantaged groups suffering disproportionately from the impacts of climate change.”*

With respect to water resources, the report states that climate changes that will affect the Central Coast include:

- Temperatures, both maximums and minimums, are anticipated to increase through the next century, with greater increases in the inland region.
- Precipitation is expected to increase slightly, but precipitation variability will increase substantially.
- Atmospheric river events are expected to increase.
- Sea level is expected to continue rising.
- Fog impacts are uncertain.
- Droughts are predicted to remain a serious challenge to already stressed water supplies.
- Water supply shortages, already common during drought, will be exacerbated.

In 2020, approximately 275,441 people used 51,593 acre-feet of water (including agricultural uses) within the County. Groundwater accounted for 78% of the total supply, surface water accounted for 19%, and recycled water accounted for 3% ([Santa Cruz County Water Resources Report for 2020](#)). Drought conditions lead to less rainfall, and less groundwater recharge, and result in increased water use. Increased groundwater production may lead to lowering of groundwater levels, increased seawater intrusion, groundwater quality degradation, subsidence, and loss of interconnectivity between surface streams and groundwater dependent ecosystems.

### WAC Role

The WAC should maintain a focus on drought and climate change impacts on water resources and receive, review, and potentially accept reports from County staff and/or experts in the field. The WAC should proactively engage with the BOS on issues related to climate change impacts on water resources and advise the BOS.

In response to SB 552, signed into law in September 2021, the WAC voted to assume the responsibility of oversight of the County's approach to compliance. The WAC will form a

Drought Response Working Group which will be charged with preparing a plan for drought and water shortage risks and will include the following 5 elements at minimum:

- (1) Consolidations for existing water systems and domestic wells.
- (2) Domestic well drinking water mitigation programs.
- (3) Provision of emergency and interim drinking water solutions.
- (4) An analysis of the steps necessary to implement the plan.
- (5) An analysis of local, state, and federal funding sources available to implement the plan

### **3. PAJARO RIVER FLOOD PROTECTION PROJECT**

#### Background

The Pajaro Flood Risk Reduction Project was authorized by the Flood Control Act of 1966 following overtopping and failure in 1955 of the original Army Corps levees built in 1949. The two local sponsors, the Zone 7 Flood Control District of Santa Cruz County and the Monterey County Water Resources Agency, have been working with the Corps since 1966 to develop a preferred alternative and to finalize environmental review on an improved levee system that will more adequately address flooding in the lower Pajaro River system (including Salsipuedes Creek). In 2021, the Pajaro Regional Flood Management Agency (PRFMA), the “local sponsors,” formed to plan, finance and implement projects and programs to reduce flood risk from the lower Pajaro River and its tributaries in Santa Cruz and Monterey Counties. The PRFMA is a joint powers authority of the County of Santa Cruz, Santa Cruz County Flood Control and Water Conservation Zone No. 7, the County of Monterey, the Monterey County Water Resources Agency, and the City of Watsonville.

#### WAC Role

The WAC should keep informed of the ongoing work of the PRFMA; receive, review, and potentially accept reports from County staff and/or PRFMA; and provide a recommendation to the BOS regarding adoption of a final plan/project alternative that supports improved watershed functions as well as provisions of adequate flood protection.

### **4. KARST PROTECTION ZONE PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT**

#### Background

County codes have not historically provided protection for karst-derived water resources. These resources are disproportionately important for support of both municipal water supply and cold water fisheries (including coho and steelhead) and, due to their unique geology, are both limited in geographic scope and highly subject to degradation by anthropogenic disturbance.

In 2016, the BOS directed County departments to incorporate karst-protective language into future updates of their respective ordinances and policies. Environmental Health Services initiated updates of their onsite wastewater disposal ordinance, with such language in 2018, and Planning incorporated karst-protective standards in the commercial cannabis cultivation and manufacturing policies, also in 2018.

### WAC Role

Review of geologic mapping to determine priority focus areas, periodic review of the status of policy and ordinance updates by County departments, review of the specific details of these changes and subsequent follow up with the BOS as appropriate, should be an ongoing focus for the WAC on this issue. Specifically, the WAC may advocate for protection of key karst zones in future General Plan updates.

## **5. ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING AND CODE COMPLIANCE PERFORMANCE**

### Background

The WAC has been aware that enforcement of County environmental and resource protection codes (Title 16) has been inconsistent. Due to the dynamics of staffing, the pre-existing historic, non-conforming development that dominates most watersheds in the County, population pressure and other challenges, implementation of these codes is challenging. Given the presence of special status listed species (e.g. steelhead and coho) in County streams, effective implementation of these codes is a high priority.

### WAC Role

The WAC should continue to support these efforts. Specifically, the WAC may ask Planning to provide an annual update on code compliance program functions, advocate to the District Attorney's office their support for pursuit of prosecution of egregious violations, evaluate the future role of the County in timber harvest review, and consider how they can support implementation of the Riparian Conservation Program (RCP) in the San Lorenzo River watershed as well as other watersheds throughout the County.

## **6. OTHER ISSUES AS NEEDED (TBD)**

### Background

The WAC occasionally becomes aware of issues that warrant investigation and interaction with the BOS regarding County policy. While many of these issues fall within broader subject areas already on the WAC agenda, other issues may arise that are outside of the WAC's current scope.

### WAC Role

While the County is well supported by knowledgeable policy-makers and other water stakeholder groups that can inform the BOS, the WAC is the only advisory body specifically focused on water resource management, as enabled by County code, and should maintain and strengthen that role with the BOS as much as possible. These somewhat urgent, new issues are not unusual, and maintaining the ability to respond to them in a timely manner is of great importance to the WAC. The meeting frequency of the BOS and WAC often limits the opportunity for timely engagement on new issues, but the WAC should endeavor to maintain involvement in them, nonetheless. Specifically, the WAC should exercise the option to hold emergency meetings to address issues like this as they arise.

## **7. COORDINATION WITH OTHER COUNTY COMMISSIONS**

### Background

In 2014, discussion was initiated between three County commissions (Commission on the Environment (COE), Fish and Wildlife Advisory Commission (FWAC) and Water Advisory Commission (WAC)) that have significant overlap in their scopes regarding protection of water resources and related environmental issues. The Inter-Commission Coordination Working Group (ICCWG) was formed in an attempt to clarify the distinct and shared areas of focus of each commission.

### WAC Role

Developing the three commissions' alignment around positions on water resource management issues and identifying and maintaining discrete roles of the commissions respective to their particular subject matter expertise and bylaws should continue to be the focus of this work. The WAC should continue to participate in the ICCWG and joint commission meetings, focus on resolving joint strategies on issues that require coordination with other commissions, reduce redundancy in effort and find synergies with these other commissions' work where possible. This will ensure that the BOS is kept apprised of significant water resource management issues in a meaningful manner that is inclusive of other related significant issues the County currently faces (fisheries conservation and recovery, climate change adaptation, etc.)



# County of Santa Cruz

---

## Water Advisory Commission

701 Ocean Street, Room 312 ❖ Santa Cruz, CA 95060

(831) 454-2022 ❖ Fax (831) 454-3128

<https://scceh.com/Home/Programs/WaterResources/WaterAdvisoryCommission.aspx>

## Process for Revising WAC Work Plan

### **Purpose and Process:**

The Santa Cruz County Water Advisory Commission (WAC) Work Plan should be reviewed annually, and revised biannually to incorporate relevant and emerging issues in order to maintain the Commission's effectiveness as a public forum, as an advisory body to the Board, and as a supporter of County staff efforts.

Given resource constraints of County staff, an individual or party proposing revisions to the Work Plan will be responsible for developing a brief summary on the topic of interest by answering the questions below. This process also applies to the WAC advising the BOS on pending state and federal legislation.

### **Questions for New Issues/Topics/Pending Legislation:**

**(1-2 sentence answers are sufficient.)**

- (1) Who are the proposing parties? (Example: County Supervisor, WAC Commissioner, County staff or at the request of another advisory body.)
- (2) Provide a brief description of the issue/topic/pending legislation. (Optional - Provide the executive summary and analysis written by the independent state or federal legislative analyst.)
- (3) What is the envisioned action that the proposing party requests from the WAC? (See page two for guidance.)
- (4) Is there another BOS advisory body taking the topic under consideration? If so, how do you envision coordination between the WAC and that advisory body?
- (5) Who will be the primary party handling the detailed research and analysis (if needed) in order for the WAC to discuss and take action?
- (6) How do you propose the WAC fit the topic into the time constraints of six annual WAC meetings given the existing workload?
- (7) Do you have other specific recommendations to make to the WAC?

**Possible WAC Actions/Roles/Points of Influence:**  
**(From the 2022-2023 Work Plan)**

Consistent with its by-laws, the WAC will focus on priority environmental issues, policies and projects, with the intent of taking one or more of the following actions:

- Advise the Board of Supervisors (BOS) on issues related to water resources.
- Work cooperatively with county departments, other county commissions, public and private agencies, and concerned members of the public, to formulate advice to the BOS.
- Serve as an information clearinghouse to the BOS and other County commissions.
- Advise the BOS on potential areas of cooperation with other public and private agencies and organizations.
- Provide a public forum to educate the WAC and the community.
- Support the work of County staff in implementing water resource programs.
- Monitor and evaluate implementation of key policies and programs and advise the BOS as needed.
- Proactively identify water resource issues of concern that are not being addressed by other advisory bodies to the BOS.

Adopted April, 2022



# County of Santa Cruz

## Water Advisory Commission

701 Ocean Street, Room 312, Santa Cruz, CA 95060  
(831) 454-2022 TDD/TTY -Call 711 [www.scceh.com](http://www.scceh.com)  
[EnvironmentalHealth@santacruzcounty.us](mailto:EnvironmentalHealth@santacruzcounty.us)



**Subject:** October 4, 2023 Water Advisory Commission Item G1

**Title:** Well Ordinance Update Status

### Recommended Action:

1. Direct staff to hold a public workshop at the August 7, 2024 Water Advisory Commission meeting.

### Background

At the August 2, 2023 Water Advisory Commission meeting, the Commission directed staff to form a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and begin contacting potential members. The TAC has now met four times and the first draft of the updated Santa Cruz County Code sections 7.70 and 7.73 have been completed though minor adjustments are still being made. All materials relating to the well ordinance update can be found at:

<https://scceh.com/NewHome/Programs/WaterResources/WellOrdinanceUpdate.aspx>

### Updates:

The following process table has been presented at each TAC meeting:

TAC Update Meetings	Meeting Topics (Subject to Change)
<b>Meeting 1; November 6, 2023</b>	1) Introductions, ground rules, goal, expectations 2) Intro to well ordinance, reasons for update 3) Code update process 4) Topics for future in-depth discussion
<b>Meeting 2; December 8, 2023</b>	Focused meeting on groundwater: 1) Sustainable Groundwater Management Act, GSAs, GSPs 2) Groundwater emergencies 3) Metering of non-de minimis new and replacement wells 5) Areas of declining GW levels/quality and new wells 6) How to include Karst



<b>Resource Impact Subgroup January 8, 2024</b>	Review and discussion of resource impacts, considerations and tiered approach to well permit evaluation and requirements
<b>Meeting 3; January 29, 2024</b>	Evaluating surrounding impacts of wells: 1) Consider impacts to surrounding wells 2) Discuss where/how wells may impact Public Trust values 3) Discuss tiered approach to determine when additional evaluation and/or protections are needed
<b>Meeting 4; May 21, 2024</b>	TAC reviews draft language changes, policy and procedures.
<b>Public Workshop</b>	
<b>Optional Meeting 5</b>	Review Final language
<b>Optional Meeting 6</b>	Final review after changes from Planning Commission, Coastal Commission, BOS

Some additional information on next steps is as follows:

1. TAC members to review current updates and submits comments
2. Updated documents prepared.
3. Public Workshop held (possibly in August WAC meeting)
4. Documents updated as needed in response to public comments. Optional TAC meeting if needed.
5. EH staff works with CDI staff to complete CEQA review, tribal review, and review by Planning Commission.
6. Package considered by Board of Supervisors.
7. Package submitted to Coastal Commission

Staff believe that the Water Advisory Commission meeting would be an appropriate time and place for the public workshop as it is a noticed public meeting. Additional outreach will be made to key constituent groups such as the Farm Bureau and Association of Realtors. The public will also be able to comment during later presentations to the Planning Commission, Coastal Commission, and Board of Supervisors.

Presented by: Sierra Ryan

Water Resources Program Manager

**From:** [Becky Steinbruner](#)  
**To:** [Sierra Ryan](#); [Paul Lego](#)  
**Cc:** [Michael Beaton](#)  
**Subject:** Thank You for Your Good Letter to County Board of Supervisors re: Rountree Water Quality and Recommendations  
**Date:** Saturday, April 27, 2024 11:55:53 PM

---

**\*\*\*CAUTION:**This is an EXTERNAL email. Exercise caution. DO NOT open attachments or click links from unknown senders or unexpected email.\*\*\*

Dear Santa Cruz County Water Advisory Commission,  
Thank you for sending the excellent letter to the County Board of Supervisors regarding the Rountree Detention Center Well and General Services application for assistance (#1 in Correspondence for April 30 Board meeting). [http://santacruzcountyca.ig2.com/Citizens/Detail\\_Meeting.aspx?ID=2039](http://santacruzcountyca.ig2.com/Citizens/Detail_Meeting.aspx?ID=2039)

I am grateful that your letter includes a recommendation to provide inmates bottled water until the treatment systems for PFAS and hexavalent chromium are in place and operational and urge you to meet with your respective District Supervisor to ensure this recommendation has their support.

Thank you for your good work and public service.

Sincerely,  
Becky Steinbruner

**From:** [Sierra Ryan](#)  
**Bcc:**  
**Subject:** FW: Disappointing Testimony at Budget Hearing Today re: Water Quality at Rountree Detention Well and Need for Bottled Water  
**Date:** Thursday, May 23, 2024 10:56:00 AM

---

Commissioners,

Ms. Steinbruner sent an email to the Commission, see below. Mr. Beaton stated at the meeting that Rountree is in compliance with all drinking water regulations, which is true. The [video recording of the meeting](#) doesn't seem to be working right (it's only 3 ½ minutes), but if it becomes available, the discussion was during the budget item for the Sheriff.

Sierra Ryan, Water Resources Manager  
County of Santa Cruz Environmental Health  
Health Services Agency  
701 Ocean St rm 312  
Santa Cruz, CA, 95060  
(831) 345-5202  
[Sierra.Ryan@santacruzcountyca.gov](mailto:Sierra.Ryan@santacruzcountyca.gov)

---

**From:** Becky Steinbruner <ki6tkb@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, May 22, 2024 3:10 PM  
**To:** Sierra Ryan <Sierra.Ryan@santacruzcountyca.gov>; Paul Lego  
**Cc:** Michael Beaton <Michael.Beaton@santacruzcountyca.gov>; Jim Hart <Jim.Hart@santacruzcountyca.gov>; Justin Cummings <Justin.Cummings@santacruzcountyca.gov>; Becky Steinbruner <ki6tkb@yahoo.com>  
**Subject:** Disappointing Testimony at Budget Hearing Today re: Water Quality at Rountree Detention Well and Need for Bottled Water

**\*\*\*CAUTION:** This is an EXTERNAL email. Exercise caution. DO NOT open attachments or click links from unknown senders or unexpected email. **\*\*\***

Dear County Water Advisory Commission,  
Thank you for your letter dated April 30, 2024 to the Board of Supervisors, recommending inmates at the Rountree Detention Facility receive bottled water, given the information Mr. Michael Beaton presented to your Commission on April 3, 2024 describing the contamination problem at the well that serves the facility.

Your excellent letter was provided to the Board in the Written Correspondence Listing as letter #t:  
[http://santacruzcountyca.iqm2.com/Citizens/Detail\\_Meeting.aspx?ID=2039](http://santacruzcountyca.iqm2.com/Citizens/Detail_Meeting.aspx?ID=2039)

Today, I attended the County Budget Hearings and testified during the Sheriff-Coroner Department presentations that the well at Rountree Detention Facility is contaminated, and reminded the Board of your April 30, 2024 letter to them, recommending the inmates and staff there receive bottled water accordingly.

Imagine my surprise when Mr. Beaton went to the podium and stated that there is only a slight elevation of PFAS, but the water is fine to drink. The Board took no action to request a follow-up on your Commission's recommendation.

I request that you meet with your respective District Supervisors to discuss the matter with him, urging reconsideration of the action that will seemingly deny inmates clean, safe water that is free of PFAS and hexavalent chromium.

I am concerned that the inmates will not be provided any alternative source of clean drinking water until the ion exchange treatment system that Mr. Beaton described to your Commission is implemented and operational.

I am also concerned that this treatment system will require grant funding, but now that Mr. Beaton has gone on public record at the Budget Hearings as stating "the water is fine to drink", any possible grant opportunities may now be lost.

Please discuss this important health and safety issue for the inmates and County staff on site at Rountree Detention Facility with your respective County Supervisors.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Becky Steinbruner

**From:** [Sierra Ryan](#)  
**Bcc:**  
**Subject:** FW: Rountree Well Treatment Project on Board of Supervisor June 4, 2024 Consent Agenda Item #32  
**Date:** Monday, June 3, 2024 3:47:00 PM

---

Commissioners,

Forwarding this communication from Ms. Steinbruner.

Sierra Ryan, Water Resources Manager  
County of Santa Cruz Environmental Health  
Health Services Agency  
701 Ocean St rm 312  
Santa Cruz, CA, 95060  
(831) 345-5202  
[Sierra.Ryan@santacruzcountyca.gov](mailto:Sierra.Ryan@santacruzcountyca.gov)

---

**From:** Becky Steinbruner <ki6tkb@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, June 1, 2024 9:05 PM  
**To:** Sierra Ryan <Sierra.Ryan@santacruzcountyca.gov>; Paul Lego <>  
**Cc:** Ray Pereyra <>  
**Subject:** Rountree Well Treatment Project on Board of Supervisor June 4, 2024 Consent Agenda Item #32

**\*\*\*\*CAUTION:**This is an EXTERNAL email. Exercise caution. DO NOT open attachments or click links from unknown senders or unexpected email.**\*\*\*\***

Dear Santa Cruz County Water Advisory Commission,  
Please note that the Board of Supervisors' June 4 Regular Meeting includes Consent Agenda Item #32, accepting the \$800,000 state grant awarded for treatment of Chromium 6 and PFAS at the Rountree Detention Center Well.

I submitted written comment asking the Board to approve providing the inmates and staff at the Detention facility with bottled water until the treatment facility is operational. Your Commission made this recommendation to the Board in your April 30, 2024 letter to the Board (#t in Correspondence for April 30 Board meeting).  
[http://santacruzcountyca.igq2.com/Citizens/Detail\\_Meeting.aspx?ID=2039](http://santacruzcountyca.igq2.com/Citizens/Detail_Meeting.aspx?ID=2039)

Here is the link to the staff report included in Consent Item #32, for the June 4 Regular Board meeting:  
[http://santacruzcountyca.igq2.com/Citizens/Detail\\_LegiFile.aspx?Frame=&MeetingID=2043&MediaPosition=&ID=15957&CssClass=&RequestTime=63852878203283.3](http://santacruzcountyca.igq2.com/Citizens/Detail_LegiFile.aspx?Frame=&MeetingID=2043&MediaPosition=&ID=15957&CssClass=&RequestTime=63852878203283.3)

I hope that your Commission will continue to monitor this problem, and advise your respective Supervisors.

Thank you for your good public service.

Sincerely,  
Becky Steinbruner

[AI Assistance: This document was generated with the assistance of an Artificial Intelligence language model, OpenAI GPT-4, 2023, in compliance with the County of Santa Cruz Appropriate Use Policy.]

(Reference: Microsoft AI stated response to question.) Ray Pereyra; 5/28/2024

## What is EPA's new PFAS rule? (April 10, 2024)

### Summary

The **Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)** recently announced the final **National Primary Drinking Water Regulation (NPDWR)** for **per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS)**. Here are the key points about this new rule:

#### 1. **PFAS Regulation:**

- The rule establishes legally enforceable levels, called **Maximum Contaminant Levels (MCLs)**, for six specific PFAS compounds in drinking water.
- These compounds include **PFOA, PFOS, PFHxS, PFNA, HFPO-DA (commonly known as GenX Chemicals)**, and **PFAS mixtures** containing at least two or more of PFHxS, PFNA, HFPO-DA, and PFBS.
- The MCLs set strict limits on the concentration of these PFAS in drinking water.

#### 2. **Health-Based Limits:**

- The MCLs for individual PFAS are as follows:
  - PFOA: 4.0 parts per trillion (ppt)
  - PFOS: 4.0 ppt
  - PFHxS: 10 ppt
  - PFNA: 10 ppt
  - HFPO-DA (GenX Chemicals): 10 ppt
- Additionally, there is a **Hazard Index MCL** for mixtures containing two or more of the specified PFAS.

#### 3. **Monitoring and Compliance:**

- Public water systems must monitor for these PFAS and complete initial monitoring by **2027**.
- Water systems must provide information to the public about PFAS levels in their drinking water starting in **2027**.
- If monitoring shows that drinking water levels exceed the MCLs, water systems have **five years (by 2029)** to implement solutions to reduce PFAS levels.
- After **2029**, water systems violating MCLs must take action to reduce PFAS levels and notify the public of the violation.

#### 4. **Impact and Funding:**

- EPA expects that over many years, the rule will prevent PFAS exposure in drinking water for approximately **100 million people**, prevent thousands of deaths, and reduce tens of thousands of serious PFAS-attributable illnesses.
- [To support implementation, \\$1 billion in funding is available through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law for PFAS testing and treatment at public water systems and addressing PFAS contamination in private wells<sup>12</sup>.](#)

[Additionally, in April 2024, EPA designated PFOA and PFOS as hazardous substances under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act \(Superfund\), enhancing transparency and accountability for PFAS cleanup efforts in communities<sup>3</sup>.](#) This step aims to address PFAS contamination more effectively.

~~~~~