

**NAPA COUNTY  
RESPONSE TO THE GRAND JURY FINAL REPORT ON  
MANAGEMENT OF GROUNDWATER AND RECYCLED WATER  
JUNE 2, 2015**

The Grand Jury requested responses from the Board of Supervisors are included below.

**Finding 1.** The County has done an effective job of managing groundwater resources to date. However, there is no contingency plan in place that details the steps to be taken in case the drought continues and groundwater supplies are further depleted.

*Board of Supervisors' Response:* The Board partially agrees with this finding. The County has invested significant resources to ensure an adequate understanding of our groundwater resources. This is evidenced in the Napa County Comprehensive Groundwater Monitoring Program 2014 Annual Report and CASGEM Update, dated February 2015 and presented to the Board and public on March 3, 2015. The monitoring program provides an "early warning system" to provide sufficient time to respond should a significant problem develop.

Further, the County is in the process of developing an Alternative Groundwater Sustainability Plan (AGSP), as authorized and required by the Sustainable Groundwater Act, which was passed by the California Legislature and signed into law by Governor Brown on September 16, 2014. The County entered into a contract with Luhdorff & Scalmanini Consulting Engineers, the County's groundwater consultant, on July 14, 2015 for the preparation of an AGSP. The ASGP is in development and must be complete and provided to the State for their review no sooner than June 30, 2016 (as the State will not issue their standards for such a plan until that date), and no later than January 1, 2017. The ASGP will address available contingency actions to respond to the various issues that could occur.

**Finding 2.** Despite the continuing drought and some evidence that aquifers on the Valley floor may not be fully recharging, there appears to be sufficient groundwater available on the Valley floor at this time.

*Board of Supervisors' Response:* The Board agrees with this finding.

**Finding 3.** Groundwater is less plentiful on the county's hillsides, and each parcel must be studied independently. There have been a number of reports of existing wells drying up, and finding water for new wells is often difficult.

*Board of Supervisors' Response:* The Board partially agrees with this finding. The County's groundwater monitoring program confirms that groundwater is less accessible on many hillside parcels than it is on the valley floor, and that each parcel applying for development permits needs to be studied independently. The County approved a new process for doing so, the Water Availability Analysis, in April of this year. The County can also confirm that there have been reports of wells drying up, and that finding water for new wells can be difficult. However,

based on well permit data, the number of wells drying up and the ability to find water do not appear to be statistically different than 10 or even 20 years ago.

**Finding 4.** The County cannot enforce their usage restrictions effectively because they do not monitor usage of groundwater or enforce limits on groundwater extraction.

**Board of Supervisors' Response:** The Board partially agrees with this finding. Wells approved in the Milliken Sarco Tulocay (MST) area since 1999 have meters, extraction limits, and are required to report their usage to the county twice annually. Enforcement of the usage restriction is conducted by Planning, Building, and Environmental Services (PBES).

Many wineries approved since around 2005 also have metering requirements, but are not required to report their data unless requested and do not have extraction limits.

The Board agrees that other properties are not currently required to meter and do not have extraction limits.

**Recommendation No. 1:** By December 31, 2015, the Napa County Public Works Department to develop a contingency plan, approved by the Board of Supervisors, that lays out the major steps to be taken in the event of severe drought conditions.

**Board of Supervisors' Response:** The recommendation will be implemented in the context of the Alternative Groundwater Sustainability Plan, due to the State between June 30, 2016 and January 1, 2017.

**Recommendation No. 2:** By June 30, 2016, the Napa County Public Works Department to require major groundwater users to meter and report their water usage on a quarterly basis to ensure all well owners are following prescribed usage rates.

**Board of Supervisors' Response:** The recommendation requires further analysis. This recommendation will be considered in the context of the Alternative Groundwater Sustainability Plan, due to the State between June 30, 2016 and January 1, 2017. Development of the plan will include significant outreach to and input from the public. The Board of Supervisors will consider and determine the necessary amount of metering and reporting in the context of this public discussion.

**Recommendation No. 3:** By June 30, 2016, the Napa County Public Works Department to adopt policies to encourage all other groundwater users to meter and monitor their well water usage.

**Board of Supervisors' Response:** The recommendation requires further analysis. This recommendation will be considered in the context of the Alternative Groundwater Sustainability Plan, due to the State between June 30, 2016 and January 1, 2017. Development of the plan will include significant outreach to and input from the public. The Board of

Supervisors will consider and determine the necessary amount of metering and reporting in the context of this public discussion.