



South Fork Kings
Groundwater Sustainability Agency

New Landowner Vote

Ballots due November 16, 2023

Why is the South Fork Kings Groundwater Sustainability Agency (SFKGSA or Agency) proposing another assessment?

Assessments paid by landowners are the only revenue source for the Agency. Revenues are used to comply with the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA), an unfunded State mandate. SFKGSA's activities include developing and updating its Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP). Implementation of this plan includes, in part, the following:

- Managing and reporting groundwater sustainable (safe) yield,
- Reducing subsidence associated with declining groundwater levels,
- Mitigation of domestic wells that have gone dry from over pumping, and
- Collaborating with the Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program (ILRP), and the Water Quality Coalition, to protect and improve water quality.

According to SGMA, the SFKGSA must obtain sustainability for these reportable parameters by 2040. "There's a lot of work to be done therefore we must get busy otherwise the State will intervene and seize local control," cautions Paul Stiglich, General Manager for the SFKGSA.

Currently, there is no assessment in place and SFKGSA does not have a stable revenue source to fund SGMA compliance. On June 30, 2023, the prior assessment of \$9.80/acre expired and could no longer be charged. The Agency unsuccessfully proposed a replacement assessment of \$20/acre that would be billed in perpetuity. "That defeated assessment included funds for supply side management, which the voters rejected at the Public Hearing on July 27, 2023. This new proposed assessment of \$10.10 per acre is only thirty cents more than the previous assessment that landowners have been

TIMELINE

2014 – The Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) is signed into law

2017 – The South Fork Kings Groundwater Sustainability Agency is formed to comply with SGMA.

2018 – Landowners approve a \$9.80/acre assessment to be collected annually for five years

2020 – SFKGSA submits its groundwater sustainability plan (GSP) to the State

2022 – SFKGSA submits an addendum to the GSP

July 2023 – the \$9.80/acre assessment sunset and is no longer charged. Landowners vote down a proposed new assessment of \$20/acre in perpetuity.

August 2023 – SFKGSA reviews its operating costs and expenses to prepare a GSP update. The Agency develops an updated Assessment Engineer's Report.

September 2023 – SFKGSA initiates a new assessment election and asks landowners to consider approving a \$10.10/acre assessment. If approved, the assessment will sunset in July 2028.

paying over the last five years. This new assessment only addresses demand side management and includes managing the parameters previously listed above. This new assessment (once passed) will keep local control of this Agency out of the hands of the Sacramento Bureaucrats," says GM Stiglich.

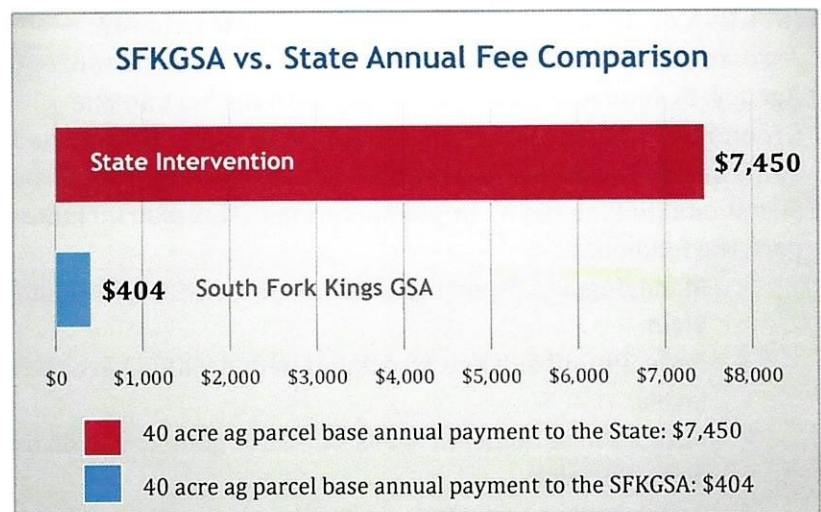
SFKGSA listened to the concerns of landowners. The Agency reviewed its costs and options for raising funds. SFKGSA asks landowners to approve a revised assessment of \$10.10/acre that will sunset July 1, 2028. The proposed assessment will cover the costs of administration, operations, and updates of the GSP. These activities benefit all landowners even if you do not have a groundwater well. "If you live in Kings County all your drinking water comes from groundwater wells. Even if you do not have a well on your property, groundwater is being pumped somewhere to supply your domestic water needs and therefore we are all in this together," admonishes GM Stiglich.

Potential Costs if the Assessment Vote Fails

The Agency's Board of Directors strives to meet the requirements of SGMA at an affordable cost for the landowners. SFKGSA is working to conduct revisions to its GSP and will attend a hearing in January 2024 with the Department of Water Resources to address issues. It is critical that the Agency demonstrate to regulators that it is working towards sustainability and has the funds available to meet the goals of SGMA. Absent a new assessment, SFKGSA will be unable to fund local implementation of SGMA and the State may intervene. The State Water Resources Control Board would impose a fee structure on groundwater pumpers many times more costly than the assessment proposed by the SKFGSA and would impose restrictions without providing local benefits.

For more information visit

<https://southforkkings.org/218election>



Public Outreach and Participation

Provided below are upcoming public outreach meetings. All meetings will be held at 5:30pm at the Lemoore Council Chambers 429 C Street, Lemoore, CA 93245.

October 12: the Agency will conduct a landowner outreach workshop to present the proposed assessment, provide SGMA updates, hear concerns, and answer questions.

October 19: SFKGSA will hold a regularly scheduled Board of Directors meeting. The public is invited to attend the meeting and address the Board.

November 16: the Agency will conduct a public hearing to tally the assessment ballots.

If you have questions or would like to submit written comments, please contact Paul Stiglich, General Manager, at (559) 423-5875 or paul@southforkkings.org.