



Directors

Clifford M. Powell Jr, President

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Dear LCWD customer,

In August 2014, the California Legislature passed the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA), which went into effect January 1, 2015. SGMA requires, for the first time, that groundwater in the state will have to be managed to protect the long-term reliability of the resource. The management strategy mandates that high- and medium-priority groundwater basins in the state establish Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs) responsible for groundwater management by June 30, 2017. The Linden County Water District (LCWD) is located in the Eastern San Joaquin Sub-Basin, a high priority groundwater basin. LCWD has formed a GSA and has notified the Department of Water Resources (DWR).

During the past two years, LCWD has participated in the local SGMA Workgroup. The discussions of this workgroup led to the formation of a Joint Power Authority (JPA) which will develop a basin-wide Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) in compliance with the state's regulations. These plans are required to be completed in the year 2020 or 2022, depending on the conditions of the basin; 20 years after that date, the GSA's are required to achieve their sustainability mandate. The actual goal is not yet set, as it is a key part of the GSP development, however keeping the basin in the same condition it was in 1992 is frequently mentioned as a target. This will require continued monitoring and conservation efforts for the foreseeable future.

Public water suppliers like LCWD, which rely solely on groundwater to meet customer demand, cannot by definition be sustainable. That is, we cannot refill the aquifer below us at a rate equal to our usage. Therefore we must recognize that, along with our neighboring agencies, we must strive in the future to use no more groundwater than the amount that flows into our aquifer due to rainfall and infiltration. To illustrate how the groundwater levels have changed, the average drop in the past 50 years has been about 20 feet in the monitoring wells, about 0.4 ft/year. In the past six years, after fifteen years of relatively stable levels, the drop has been more than triple that rate.

The current restrictions on water usage due to the emergency declaration of the past two years are not directly related to the SGMA goals. With your cooperation LCWD has met the reduced usage goals for each of the past two years. While some of the usage restrictions have been lifted by the State of California, the LCWD Board felt that most should remain in place until we have a better understanding of the SGMA goals.

LCWD will be participating in the development of the GSP, and will provide periodic reports on the progress and the likely impact of the GSP on Linden. The LCWD Board appreciates your ongoing cooperation and encourages you to attend the monthly Board meetings and to direct any questions you may have to the LCWD Office Manager, Barbara Kascht for inclusion in the meeting agenda.