



Santa Ynez River Valley Groundwater Basin
 Eastern Management Area
 Groundwater Sustainability Agency
 P.O. BOX 68
 SANTA YNEZ CA 93460

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NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING Proposed Groundwater Extraction Fee

April 2025

This notice provides information to Consider a Proposed Groundwater Extraction Fee Within the Santa Ynez River Valley Groundwater Basin Eastern Management Area

NOTICE TO PROPERTY OWNERS

The Santa Ynez River Valley Groundwater Basin Eastern Management Area Groundwater Sustainability Agency ("EMA GSA" or "Agency") is hereby providing notice of a proposed groundwater extraction or pumping fee, as required by California Constitution Article XIII D, Section 6. This notice is being provided to inform property owners of the proposed fee and their right to protest. The proposed pumping fee would apply only to those who pump or receive groundwater from the Santa Ynez Upland portion of the Eastern Management Area. The fee would not apply to those who pump or receive water from the Santa Ynez River.

The EMA GSA is a Joint Powers Authority formed by the following agencies to manage groundwater in the EMA

- City of Solvang
- Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District
- Santa Barbara County Water Agency
- Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District Improvement District No. 1

The EMA GSA Board of Directors ("Board") will conduct a Public Hearing on **June 26, 2025 at 4:00 PM at the Santa Ynez Community Services District Meeting Room, 1070 Faraday Street, Santa Ynez, CA 93460**. Interested parties are invited and welcome to appear at the time and place of the Public Hearing on **June 26, 2025** to give oral or written testimony or to submit written protests regarding the proposed fee implementation. The EMA GSA Board will hear and consider all oral testimony and written materials submitted regarding the proposed groundwater extraction fee at the Public Hearing. The Board has the authority to adjust the proposed groundwater extraction fee in response to oral testimony and/or written materials submitted for consideration, provided the groundwater extraction fee does not increase beyond what is proposed in this Notice. If adopted by the EMA GSA Board, the proposed fee would take effect July 1, 2025, and each July 1 thereafter through July 1, 2029. Property owners that pump groundwater would see the groundwater extraction fee charge on their next and future property tax bills or through direct billing. Property owners that receive water from a public water utility or mutual water company would not be charged directly, but subject to each jurisdiction's Proposition 218 process, they may see an increase in their utility water bill.

California's Sustainable Groundwater Management Act

In 2014, the California legislature passed the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act ("SGMA"), establishing a statewide framework to help protect the state's groundwater resources. SGMA requires local agencies to form Groundwater Sustainability Agencies ("GSAs") for high and medium priority basins and develop and implement a Groundwater Sustainability Plan ("GSP") to avoid undesirable results and mitigate overdraft.

The California Department of Water Resources ("DWR") supports local SGMA implementation through regulatory oversight and the evaluation and assessment of GSPs. Prudent groundwater management will provide a safeguard against impacts from over pumping, prolonged droughts and climate change. SGMA requires local agencies to define and achieve sustainability by 2042 through development and implementation of GSPs. The EMA GSA's GSP was approved by DWR on January 18, 2024. In the event that DWR determines the GSP is not being implemented in a manner to achieve sustainability, DWR could choose to remove control from the EMA GSA and implement its own plan for Basin management.

ENDORSE
 APN #
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 CITY, ST ZIP

 BARCODE

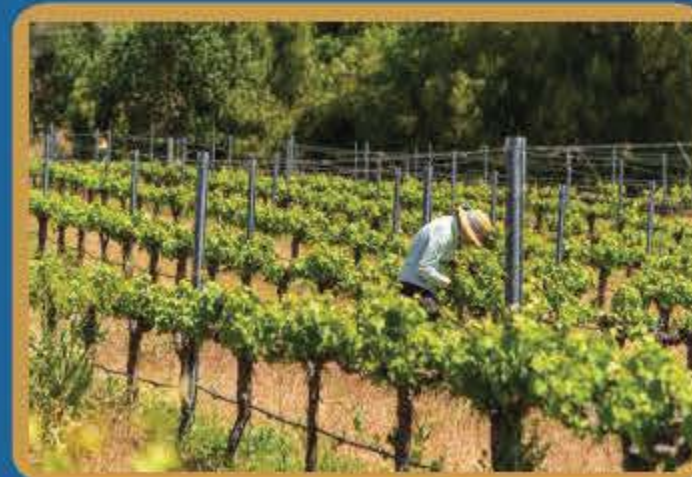
NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING - Proposed Groundwater Extraction Fee

To consider a Proposed Groundwater Extraction Fee Within the Santa Ynez River Valley Groundwater Basin Eastern Management Area

PUBLIC HEARING INFORMATION

Thursday, June 26, 2025 | 4:00 PM
Santa Ynez Community Services
District Meeting Room
1070 Faraday Street
Santa Ynez, CA 93460

 www.ema-santaynezwater.org



Versión en español disponible en www.EMA-SantaYnezWater.org. El aviso impreso está disponible en la biblioteca local: Solvang Library - 1745 Mission Drive, Solvang, CA 93463.

The Santa Ynez River Valley Groundwater Basin

The Santa Ynez River Valley Groundwater Basin (Basin) underlies approximately 317 square miles of northern Santa Barbara County and is divided into three management areas: the Eastern; Central; and Western Management Areas. The Eastern Management Area underlies approximately 150.9 square miles of the Basin and includes the City of Solvang and the unincorporated areas of Santa Ynez, Los Olivos, and Ballard.

REASONS FOR THE PROPOSED GROUNDWATER FEE

In order to fund the management of groundwater resources within the EMA, the EMA GSA must establish a revenue generating mechanism. The groundwater extraction fee will allow the EMA GSA to generate revenue to cover the essential operating costs to sustainably manage groundwater in the EMA. This will allow the EMA GSA to maintain local control, fund projects and/or management actions, and maintain compliance with SGMA.

BASIS FOR PROPOSED FEE CALCULATION

California Water Code section 10730 provides the EMA GSA with the authority to impose fees on groundwater extraction and other activities to fund the costs for the GSA, including its operating and administrative costs, GSP implementation, and to maintain a prudent reserve funding amount. A breakdown of the estimated costs for operating the EMA GSA and maintaining compliance with SGMA are provided in the EMA GSA Rate Study Report, prepared by Water Resources Economics, LLC (WRE), and is available for review on the EMA GSA website at: ema-santaynezwater.org.

In the EMA GSA Rate Study Report, WRE calculated the rate for a groundwater extraction fee that would be necessary to cover the EMA GSA operating and SGMA compliance costs. The EMA GSA may not collect more revenue than is necessary to recover the costs for providing these services. The groundwater extraction fee will be charged on a per acre foot of groundwater extracted or pumped basis and would be applicable to the parcel(s) for which you are listed as the official property owner in the County of Santa Barbara property records.

Property owners that pump groundwater would see the groundwater extraction fee charges on their next and future property tax bills or through direct billing. Property owners that receive water from a public water utility or mutual water company will not be charged directly, but subject to each jurisdiction's Proposition 218 process, they may see an increase in their utility water bill.

PROPOSED GROUNDWATER EXTRACTION FEE

The proposed five-year schedule of annual per-acre foot groundwater extraction fee was calculated by dividing the estimated cost to operate the EMA GSA by the estimated average amount of groundwater that is extracted out of the EMA over the last five years (i.e. 2020 – 2024). Calculating the fee over a five-year average helps account for variability in groundwater extractions associated with wet and dry hydrologic cycles. If adopted, the fees shown in the table below will be billed to property owners and water utilities annually for the next five years beginning on July 1, 2025.

TIME TO CHALLENGE ADOPTION OF FEES

Pursuant to California Government Code section 53759, there is a 120-day statute of limitations for judicially challenging all fees set forth in this Notice, which time period runs from the effective date of or the date of the final passage, adoption, or approval of the proposed fee.

For more information on the Proposed Groundwater Extraction Fee, the upcoming Public Hearing, and to view Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ), please visit the EMA GSA website at www.EMA-SantaYnezWater.org.

Table 1. Proposed Five-Year Schedule of Annual Groundwater Use Fee by Acre Feet

	FY 2025-26	FY 2026-27	FY 2027-28	FY 2028-29	FY 2029-30
Proposed Extraction Fee (\$/AF)	\$39.50	\$41.50	\$43.60	\$45.80	\$48.10

SUBMITTING A PROTEST TO THE PROPOSED FEE

Written protests to the proposed fee may be submitted by a property owner. Only one protest per identified parcel will be counted. Owners of multiple parcels may file one protest for each parcel owned within the EMA GSA jurisdictional area. Written protests to the proposed fee must be delivered by mail to **P.O. Box 68, Santa Ynez, CA 93460 prior to the Public Hearing** or in person during the Public Hearing at 1070 Faraday Street, Santa Ynez, CA on **June 26, 2025 at 4:00 PM**. Protests submitted electronically will not be accepted as written protests.

Written protests must: (1) State that the identified property owner is opposed to the proposed fee; (2) provide the location of the identified parcel (by street address or assessor's parcel number); and (3) include the name and signature of the property owner submitting the objection.

The EMA GSA Board will hear and consider all written protests and oral comments to the proposed fee at the Public Hearing. Oral comments will not qualify as valid protests unless accompanied by a written protest. Upon the conclusion of the Public Hearing, the EMA GSA Board will consider adoption of the proposed fee as described in this notice. If written protests against the proposed fee are not presented by a majority of the property owners of the identified parcels subject to the proposed fee, the EMA GSA Board will be authorized to adopt the proposed fee. If timely written protests are received from owners of a majority of parcels (50%+1) within the EMA GSA's jurisdictional area, the proposed fee will not be implemented.

SUBMITTING AN OBJECTION TO THE PROPOSED FEE IN ORDER TO EXHAUST ADMINISTRATIVE REMEDIES PURSUANT TO CALIFORNIA ASSEMBLY BILL 2257 (AB 2257)

Notice is hereby given that any person who wishes to object to the proposed extraction fees must first submit a timely-received written legal objection so that the District can duly consider those objections prior to making its decision. Legal objections will only be considered valid if they meet the following procedural and substantive requirements:

- Legal objections must be in writing and mailed to **P.O. Box 68, Santa Ynez, CA 93460**. Please indicate on the envelope, "Legal Objection to Proposed Water Rates."
- The District Board Secretary must receive legal written objections no later than June 9, 2025 at 4:00 p.m. so that written responses can be prepared.
- Legal objections must include the following information: Objector's name, parcel number, and/or service address.
- A statement that your communication constitutes a legal objection.
- A description of the nature of the legal objection, with sufficient specificity to allow EMA GSA staff to respond in writing. A statement that the proposed extraction fees violate Proposition 218 without an explanation as to the basis of your claim will not be sufficient to constitute a legal objection.

Failure to submit a legal objection or to meet the requirements set forth above will bar any right to challenge the proposed groundwater extraction fee through a legal proceeding.