



Santa Cruz County  
Civil Grand Jury

Santa Cruz Grand Jury <grandjury@scgrandjury.org>

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## FW: PV Water's Board Approved Response to Grand Jury Report

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'Brian Lockwood' via Santa Cruz Grand Jury <grandjury@scgrandjury.org>  
Reply-To: Brian Lockwood <Lockwood@pvwater.org>  
To: "grandjury@scgrandjury.org" <grandjury@scgrandjury.org>

Fri, Aug 19, 2022 at 4:27 PM

Dear Members of the Grand Jury,

Ms. Taay sent the attached Board response to the Honorable Judge Syda Cogliati yesterday, but neglected to CC: [grandjury@scgrandjury.org](mailto:grandjury@scgrandjury.org).

Kind regards,

Brian

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**From:** Laura Taay <[Taay@pvwater.org](mailto:Taay@pvwater.org)>  
**Sent:** Thursday, August 18, 2022 12:26 PM  
**To:** [syda.cogliati@santacruzcourt.org](mailto:syda.cogliati@santacruzcourt.org)  
**Cc:** Brian Lockwood <[Lockwood@pvwater.org](mailto:Lockwood@pvwater.org)>  
**Subject:** PV Water's Board Approved Response to Grand Jury Report

Good afternoon Judge Cogliati,

I have attached the Grand Jury Report response from the PV Water Board of Director's.

Thank you,

*Laura*

**Laura R. Taay**

**Administrative Analyst/Board Secretary**

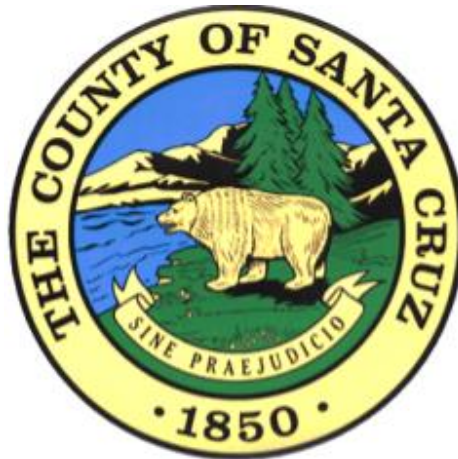
**Pajaro Valley Water Management Agency**

**36 Brennan Street, Watsonville, CA 95076**

**(831) 722-9292**



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346K



The 2021–2022 Santa Cruz County Civil Grand Jury  
Requires the

**Board of Directors,  
Pajaro Valley Water Management Agency**

to Respond by August 22, 2022

to the Findings and Recommendations listed below  
which were assigned to them in the report titled

**Our Water Account Is Overdrawn  
Beyond Conservation:  
Achieving Drought Resilience**

Responses are **required** from elected officials, elected agency or department heads, and elected boards, councils, and committees which are investigated by the Grand Jury. You are required to respond by the California Penal Code [\(PC\) §933\(c\)](#).

Your response will be considered **compliant** under [PC §933.05](#) if it contains an appropriate comment on **all** findings and recommendations **which were assigned to you** in this report.

Please follow the instructions below when preparing your response.

## Instructions for Respondents

Your assigned [Findings](#) and [Recommendations](#) are listed on the following pages with check boxes and an expandable space for summaries, timeframes, and explanations. Please follow these instructions, which paraphrase [PC §933.05](#):

1. ***For the Findings, mark one of the following responses with an “X” and provide the required additional information:***
  - a. **AGREE with the Finding**, or
  - b. **PARTIALLY DISAGREE with the Finding** – specify the portion of the Finding that is disputed and include an explanation of the reasons why, or
  - c. **DISAGREE with the Finding** – provide an explanation of the reasons why.
  
2. ***For the Recommendations, mark one of the following actions with an “X” and provide the required additional information:***
  - a. **HAS BEEN IMPLEMENTED** – provide a summary of the action taken, or
  - b. **HAS NOT YET BEEN IMPLEMENTED BUT WILL BE IN THE FUTURE** – provide a timeframe or expected date for completion, or
  - c. **REQUIRES FURTHER ANALYSIS** – provide an explanation, scope, and parameters of an analysis to be completed within six months, or
  - d. **WILL NOT BE IMPLEMENTED** – provide an explanation of why it is not warranted or not reasonable.
  
3. ***Please confirm the date on which you approved the assigned responses:***

**We approved these responses in a regular public meeting as shown in our minutes dated.** The PV Water Board of Directors approved the following assigned responses at its regular meeting on August 17, 2022. The action will be reflected in the meeting minutes when brought to the Board for consideration during its next regular meeting, September 21, 2022.

4. ***When your responses are complete, please email your completed Response Packet as a PDF file attachment to both***

The Honorable Judge Syda Cogliati [Syda.Cogliati@santacruzcourt.org](mailto:Syda.Cogliati@santacruzcourt.org) and

The Santa Cruz County Grand Jury [grandjury@scgrandjury.org](mailto:grandjury@scgrandjury.org).

***If you have questions about this response form, please contact the Grand Jury by calling 831-454-2099 or by sending an email to [grandjury@scgrandjury.org](mailto:grandjury@scgrandjury.org).***

## Findings

**F6.** Limited interdistrict water transfers have been achieved and serve as proof of concept.

**AGREE**

**PARTIALLY DISAGREE**

**DISAGREE**

**Response explanation** (required for a response other than **Agree**):

The Pajaro Valley Water Management Agency Board (“PV Water”) of Directors is aware of the “Pure Water Soquel Project,” which is presently under construction, and the “Surface Water Pilot Project - Phase 1,” which includes an inter-tie between the City of Santa Cruz and Soquel Creek Water District (“SCWD”). Given that Pure Water Soquel is in the construction phase, and the Surface Water Pilot has occurred, it is clear that some inter-district water transfers have been achieved.

PV Water is different than many of the other water districts in Santa Cruz County in that it 1) is a groundwater sustainability agency that does not deliver potable water, and 2) the area within its boundaries includes multiple counties and is composed of portions of Santa Cruz, Monterey, and San Benito counties. Given the relatively large distance from the heart of the Pajaro Valley (Watsonville/Pajaro), water transfers with districts located in the mid-county area would be challenging and costly. Furthermore, there appears to be a need and a use for Santa Cruz’s wastewater within the mid-county area as noted above. PV Water has collaborated with the City of Watsonville to construct and operate the Watsonville Area Water Recycling Facility (“RWF”). The Watsonville Wastewater Treatment Plant collects and treats wastewater from the surrounding communities including Freedom, Salsipuedes Sanitary District, Pajaro, and the City Watsonville. The RWF treats the secondary effluent water to meet Title 22 standards for tertiary treated water. PV Water then distributes this recycled water, along with other sources, to agricultural customers in the coastal area where use of the recycled water reduces reliance on groundwater and helps to reduce seawater intrusion and groundwater overdraft. PV Water developed a connection to the City of Watsonville’s potable water supply and purchases groundwater supplied from inland wells to blend with recycled water and other supplemental sources to offset groundwater pumping in the coastal area. These projects are not that different in concept than the inter-district transfers occurring between the City of Santa Cruz and SCWD, and they’ve been occurring the Pajaro Valley since ~2008.

The next project to come online for PV Water will be the [College Lake Integrated Resources Management Project](#) (“College Lake Project”). The College Lake Project will produce between 1,800 and 2,300 acre-feet of water per year on average, and a maximum amount of 3,000 acre-feet in a year. PV Water anticipates using every drop that the College Lake Project will produce to augment the supply of delivered water sold to coastal growers to offset groundwater production and stop seawater intrusion. As

noted above, PV Water's service area includes portions of both Monterey and Santa Cruz counties.

**F9.** Agency communications to the public emphasize conservation and sustainability while downplaying agency planning to achieve drought resilience.

**AGREE**

**PARTIALLY DISAGREE**

**DISAGREE**

**Response explanation** (required for a response other than **Agree**):

In a groundwater basin such as Pajaro Valley, which depends on groundwater for over 90% of the water demand for both agricultural and urban uses, any action that bolsters groundwater supplies during wet periods increases the resiliency of basin aquifers to withstand increased pumping during times of drought. PV Water’s planning for sustainability is also planning for drought resiliency.

Projects and management actions included in the 2014 Basin Management Plan (“BMP”) Update, and more recently in the BMP: Groundwater Sustainability Update 2022 (“GSU22”), such as conservation of water resources and increased recycled water deliveries, should be considered drought resiliency actions even as they are implemented in all years. Data from implementation of these projects and management actions show that they help reduce groundwater extraction during all periods, including times of drought, such that groundwater level and storage declines are less than what they were prior to these management actions being put in place. As a result, drought periods should not negate the benefits from recovery of groundwater levels and storage in wet periods. Therefore, the GSU22 provides resiliency by reducing the annual average shortfall over the long-term to meet the Pajaro Valley’s sustainability goals even with the inevitable occurrence of periodic drought.

PV Water has many ongoing programs to help achieve sustainable groundwater resources. A brief update follows. In support of PV Water’s agricultural water conservation program, the Board, in December 2020, voted to increase its water conservation budget to \$1.25 million over a 3-year period. In April 2022, the Board voted in favor of increased rebates for the “home and garden” domestic water conservation program. In the past two years the Board approved contracts that extended the delivered water service area approximately a mile further north to Monterey Bay Academy, thus reducing groundwater pumping by hundreds of acre-feet per year when the College Lake and [Watsonville Slough System Managed Aquifer Recharge and Recovery](#) (“WSS-MARR”) projects bring additional water supply to the coast.

The Board directed staff to evaluate and improve Harkins Slough Recharge Facility recovery wells, located west of San Andreas Road. The WSS-MARR projects will create a new point of diversion for surface water on Struve Slough, one that is more protected from brackish water incursions that occur periodically and negatively impact PV Water’s ability to divert fresh water from Harkins Slough as allowed by an existing

water-right permit. WSS-MARR also includes a new infiltration basin and recovery wells, which will allow PV Water to divert, recharge, and recover a greater volume of winter rainfall runoff when available; PV Water has submitted a water-right permit for up to 4,000 acre-feet to the State Water Resources Control Board.

PV Water is also implementing an innovative and exciting program called “Recharge Net Metering,” which partners with local landowners, the University of California at Santa Cruz, and the Resource Conservation District of Santa Cruz County, to plan and develop infiltration basins that capture rainwater runoff and infiltrate the water into the critically overdrafted aquifers of the Pajaro Valley Groundwater Basin.

Outreach and engagement with Pajaro Valley customers, stakeholders, and the general public is a critical aspect of what PV Water does. The work described above, along with information about the state of the basin, including drought conditions, is continually communicated through social media, a quarterly newsletter, press releases, informational ads on television and radio, special community meetings, and at monthly Board and Committee meetings. PV Water does not downplay agency planning to achieve drought resilience, as plan development and implementation are critical to both achieving sustainability and drought resiliency.

## Recommendations

- R3.** By December 31, 2022, local water districts should jointly publish an integrated recycled wastewater action plan that specifies the infrastructure improvements, expected costs, and construction schedule that will fully utilize existing wastewater sources by December 31, 2026. Responding agencies are the Scotts Valley Water District, the City of Santa Cruz Water Department, the Soquel Creek Water District, the Central Water District, the Mid-County Groundwater Management Agency, the Pajaro Valley Water Management Agency, and the City of Watsonville Water Division.

- HAS BEEN IMPLEMENTED** – summarize what has been done
- HAS NOT YET BEEN IMPLEMENTED BUT WILL BE IN THE FUTURE** – summarize what will be done and the timeframe
- REQUIRES FURTHER ANALYSIS** – explain the scope and timeframe (not to exceed six months)
- WILL NOT BE IMPLEMENTED** – explain why

### Required response explanation, summary, and timeframe:

Unlike the other water districts and agencies being asked to respond to this recommendation, the jurisdiction of the Pajaro Valley Water Management Agency is not confined to Santa Cruz County. PV Water’s jurisdiction extends into north Monterey County and includes a portion of San Benito County. To the south is the Salinas Valley Groundwater Sustainability Agency and the Castroville Seawater Intrusion Project, the first and largest project in the state to deliver recycled wastewater to coastal growers for the purpose of reducing overdraft and seawater intrusion at the coast. In other words, in looking for partners to collaborate on efficient use of wastewater, it might make just as much sense for PV Water to look south as to look north. County boundaries don’t really count for much when it comes to groundwater basins. In addition, PV Water in partnership with the City of Watsonville, has been producing and distributing recycled water since 2009 with the intent to continue for years to come. Since 2009, the partnership has led to the delivery of over 35,000 acre-feet of recycled water; in 2021 alone, over 3000 acre-feet of wastewater was recycled and reused to help stop seawater intrusion. PV Water and the City of Watsonville are already recycling a majority of the wastewater produced each year, with the exception being wastewater produced from homes connected to septic systems, but even discharge from septic systems may serve as a source of recharge to the Basin. The 2014 BMP evaluated potential projects to put to use excess wintertime wastewater, but these projects were expensive and complicated and did not make the cut for Phase 1 implementation (i.e. by 2025).

PV Water is a small Agency with a staff of 14 people and a service area that



extends from Monterey Bay Academy, just south of La Selva Beach, down through the Springfield Terrace, which abuts Moss Landing. PV Water is in the midst of bringing two major water supply projects to completion by 2025. If another body – perhaps the Santa Cruz County Environmental Health Dept. – or a collaboration between several districts and agencies, takes the leadership role in developing the Integrated Wastewater Plan called for by R3, the PV Water Board and staff would do our best to participate and contribute. Note also that the Santa Cruz County Water Advisory Commission is a hub for all things water resources related in Santa Cruz County.