Resolution 2025-04

A Resolution of the Board of Directors of the
Pajaro Valley Water Management Agency

Selecting, Approving, and Adopting Modifications to the Watsonville Slough System Managed Aquifer Recharge and Recovery Project

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The Board of Directors of the Pajaro Valley Water Management Agency does resolve as follows:

SECTION 1. Procedural Findings. The Board of Directors of the Pajaro Valley Water Management Agency ("Agency") does hereby find, determine, and declare that:

A. The Agency was formed, among other purposes, to provide integrated management of the ground and surface water resources within the Pajaro Valley Groundwater Basin ("Pajaro Basin"). As the sole local agency responsible for the integrated management of water resources for the Pajaro Basin, the Agency bears responsibility for the management and augmentation of water supplies for domestic, agricultural, municipal and industrial purposes.

B. In 1994, the Agency adopted a long-term Basin Management Plan ("BMP") which identified various water supply projects involving local water sources and importation of supplemental water, to balance water demands with water supplies in the Pajaro Basin. In 2002, the Agency adopted a revised BMP.

C. In 2010, the Agency formed an Ad Hoc BMP Committee to develop a further updated BMP that would include a portfolio of projects and programs to address the problems of seawater intrusion and basin overdraft in the Pajaro Basin. This work resulted in the Agency's adoption in 2014 of an updated BMP ("BMP Update").

D. Throughout much of the Pajaro Basin, groundwater levels have declined as a result of long-term groundwater overdraft. Overdraft conditions result in seawater intrusion, groundwater quality degradation, and groundwater storage depletion. To address these circumstances, and in furtherance of the BMP Update, the Watsonville Slough System Managed Aquifer Recharge and Recovery Project ("Project") was developed. The primary purposes of the Project are to help balance the groundwater basin, prevent further seawater intrusion, and help meet water supply needs in the Agency's service area.

E. The Project is located in unincorporated Santa Cruz County. The Project includes installation of an intake screen, replacement of intake pumps, and mechanical equipment upgrades at the Harkins Slough filter plant; installation of a screened intake and pump station at Struve Slough and a pipeline to connect the new Stuve Slough pump station to the Harkins Slough filter plant; construction of a recharge basin and associated recovery wells, monitoring wells, and pipelines; and construction of a mitigation pond adjacent to Watsonville Slough and north of the Struve Slough to filter plant pipeline.

F. The Project was processed, including but not limited to all public notices, in the time and manner prescribed by State and local law, including the California Environmental Quality Act, Public Resources Code § 21000, *et seq*. (CEQA) and the CEQA Guidelines, 14. Cal. Code Regs. § 15000, *et seq*. On January 20, 2021, the Agency's Board of Directors, at a duly noticed public hearing, considered the Final Environmental Impact Report ("EIR") prepared for the Project, and certified it in Resolution 2021-03, including adopting written findings, adopting a Statement of Overriding Considerations, and adopting a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program.

G. The following modifications have been proposed for the Project:

1. **Harkins Slough Facility.** Filter plant upgrades are no longer included; water from the intakes would be pumped directly to the recharge basins. The existing filters and associated piping on the west side of the Harkins Slough filter plant would be demolished and several mechanical equipment upgrades would occur.
2. **Struve Slough Intake and Pump Station.** The pump station was shifted west to the Land Trust's property, which was analyzed as an alternative in the EIR. The design for the pump station and access routes has been refined.
3. **Struve Slough to Filter Plant Pipeline.** The pipeline was realigned to avoid a rehabilitated wetland site, increasing length from approximately 7,150 feet to 8,000 feet.
4. **Recharge Basins.** The design of the Southeast recharge basin and associated recovery wells, monitoring wells, and pipelines has been refined, and replacement of electrical facilities at the existing recharge basin was added to the Project following field investigations.
5. **Compensatory Mitigation Site.** As a condition of the project's approval by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and consistent with adopted Mitigation Measure BR-1b, the Project now includes a proposed mitigation site to compensate for potential impacts to California red-legged frog.
6. **Project Construction.** Construction is estimated to occur over approximately 18 months beginning in 2026 pending procurement of necessary permits and property rights.

H. These modifications are described in the Addendum to the Watsonville Slough System Managed Aquifer Recharge and Recovery Project Final Environmental Impact Report (SCH No. 2019059130) dated January 20, 2021. The Agency, as Lead Agency for the Project, has evaluated the potential environmental impacts of these modifications in comparison with impacts analyzed in the certified EIR. In Resolution 2025-03, the Agency Board of Directors approved the Addendum.

I. Prior to taking action, the Agency Board of Directors has heard, been presented with, reviewed, and considered the information regarding the Project, including staff reports and presentations, and all oral and written testimony.

J. The Agency's General Manager is the custodian of records, and the documents and other materials that constitute the record of proceedings upon which this decision is based are located at the Pajaro Valley Water Management Agency, 36 Brennan Street, Watsonville, California, 95076.

SECTION 2. Substantive Findings. The Board of Directors of the Pajaro Valley Water Management Agency does hereby:

A. Declare that the above Procedural Findings are true and correct, and incorporate them herein by this reference.

B. Select, approve, and adopt the Project modifications as described in the Addendum to the Final EIR.

C. Impose as a condition on the Project each mitigation measure specified in Chapter 5 of the Addendum, and direct Agency staff to implement and to monitor the mitigation measures as described in Chapter 5.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Pajaro Valley Water Management Agency, County of Santa Cruz, State of California, this **19th** day of **March 2025** by the following vote:

AYES: Bannister, Broz, Culbertson, Newell, Rider
NOES: None
ABSENT: None
ABSTAIN: None

Stephen Rider, Chair

Attest:

Asia Valdivia, Board Secretary