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Contact: Brian Lockwood

(831) 722-9292

lockwood@pvwater.org



PV Water Board Approves \$1.2 Million Water Conservation Program Budget

Watsonville, CA, Wednesday, December 16, 2020- The PV Water Board of Directors took another step in the direction of groundwater sustainability by approving a \$1.2 million water conservation program. PV Water is partnering with the Resource Conservation District of Santa Cruz County (RCD) and the University of California Cooperative Extension (UCCE) to provide technical expertise and training to help Pajaro Valley farmers use water more efficiently. The Board action followed a staff report that concluded over the most recent five-years for which data is available (2015-2019), agricultural water use in the valley, outside the delivered water service area, was down by nearly 2,750 acre-feet (AF), or about 8%, when compared to the baseline period of 2006-2010. Conservation makes up over 40% of the solution for the Pajaro Valley to achieve groundwater sustainability.

PV Water Board of Directors described their support with thoughtful remarks that followed the conservation presentation. Director and farmer, Javier Zamora said, “The best way to make a change is to educate people; the RCD and UC have been working on that for many years.” Zamora continued, “By giving [farmers] some cash [through the rebate program] they will have an incentive to help us reach our goal.” Director Mary Bannister celebrated, “The trend lines show amazing progress. If you look at the 10-year trend lines, then the 7-year trends, and finally the 5-year it's clear the Valley is demonstrably making progress toward our goal, and it is a good thing because [conservation] is the most affordable project within the Basin Management Plan. Conservation is much cheaper than pipelines and other hard construction projects. Water conservation benefits the entire Pajaro Valley.”

PV Water has been working with the RCD and UCCE to engage Valley growers since program inception. RCD and UCCE technical experts evaluate existing on-farm practices and then provide recommendations to improve practices that are based on trials and research. As part of this new program, PV Water is increasing incentives for farmers to modify their irrigation practices to become more resource-efficient at a faster rate. Demonstrations are a part of the program to showcase new technology and practices that can save large amounts of water while not reducing crop yield. The new program will increase the number of farmers participating in the agricultural water conservation program and ultimately increase the volume of water conserved within the Pajaro Valley.

To learn more about the Conservation Program contact PV Water at 831-722-9292 or visit our website <https://www.pvwater.org/conservation/>.

The Pajaro Valley Water Management Agency (PV Water) is a state-chartered water management district formed to efficiently and economically manage existing and supplemental water supplies in order to prevent further increase in, and to accomplish continuing reduction of, long-term overdraft. The agency also works to provide and ensure sufficient water supplies for present and future anticipated needs within its boundaries, generally the greater coastal Pajaro Valley. PV Water's

Board of Directors is focused on achieving groundwater sustainability for the critically overdrafted Pajaro Valley Groundwater Basin. For more information, visit www.pvwater.org or www.facebook.com/PajaroValleyWater.

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