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Assembly California Legislature



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To Whom It May Concern:

I support the formation of the Tuscan Water District. The proposed Tuscan Water District, becoming a California Water District when approved, will be comprised of 95,000 acres from the Tehama County line to the northern border of the Western Canal Water District in Durham. Formation of this district will better allow groundwater pumpers in Butte County to support the sustainability and management of our groundwater resources.

In 2014, the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) was signed into law, providing a framework for the local management of groundwater to provide for the overall sustainability of groundwater basins. To accomplish this, SGMA outlined a path by which local jurisdictions would create Sustainable Groundwater Management Plans, approved by the State, and implemented and managed locally.

The Tuscan Water District will be a valuable part of groundwater management because currently there is no water district in the Vina basin that can manage the area it covers in its entirety. A district is necessary to oversee and maintain groundwater resources, provide representation of the landowners, and coordinate water projects and usage throughout the basin. A Board of Directors made up of landowners and/or landowner representatives from within the district's boundary will govern the District. All groundwater-using landowners – small and large, domestic and agricultural – will have representation in this governance process.

Butte County is not best suited to provide the necessary oversight and stakeholder representation. The County has already noted it is not interested in undertaking this endeavor. Even though a plan for sustainability has not been finalized, allowing Butte County to oversee the basin management will likely limit opportunities for infrastructure improvements necessary to provide sustainability and dilute the overall representation of the stakeholders. A district where impacted stakeholders can elect their own representation would seem to be the best form of governance.

When SGMA was signed into law, Governor Brown boasted that "groundwater management in California is best accomplished locally." The Tuscan Water District will ensure that groundwater users in the Vina basin are able to do just that by providing an organized, representative body that can effectively manage their precious groundwater resource and participate in the decision-making process for Butte County's groundwater future.

Our region, which is largely agricultural in nature, has long been a responsible steward of our land, water and natural resources. The Tuscan Water District will continue this legacy and help meet the management needs of our local groundwater resources. I would respectfully ask that you give their application the utmost consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "J. Gallagher".

James Gallagher
Assemblymember, Third District