

#### DIRECTORS

RICH MCGOWAN, President  
STEVE KOEHNEN, Vice President  
RAYME ANTONOWICH, Secretary  
ANDREW MENDONCA, Treasurer  
BILL CHANCE  
CRAIG KNIGHT  
BRIAN MORI  
JAMES PAIVA  
TODD TURLEY



#### OFFICERS

TOVEY GIEZENTANNER  
General Manager

#### ATTORNEY

JOE HUGHES  
Klein DeNatale Goldner

## **REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE TUSCAN WATER DISTRICT**

### **AGENDA**

**Wednesday, November 19, 2025 @ 9:00 a.m.**  
**Butte County Association of Governments (BCAG) Board Room**  
**326 Huss Drive, Chico, California 95928**

### **TUSCAN WATER DISTRICT (TWD) REGULAR BOARD MEETING**

1. Call to Order & Pledge of Allegiance
2. Public Comment. Members of the public may address the Board on any matter not already listed below. The Board cannot act at this meeting on requests made under this section of the agenda.

### **REGULAR AGENDA**

3. Board Meeting Minutes for October 15, 2025  
Recommendation: Review and Take Appropriate Action
4. Finances & Payment of the Bills  
Recommendation: Review and Take Appropriate Action
5. Mission Statement  
Recommendation: Review and Take Appropriate Action
6. Proposition 4 Readiness: Ad Hoc Committees and Near-Term Actions  
Recommendation: Review, Discuss & Take Appropriate Action.

### **COMMUNICATIONS AND REPORTS**

7. General Manager Report (Information Only)
8. Board Member Announcements, Reports and/or Requests for Future Agenda Topics

### **ADJOURNMENT**

#### NOTES

In compliance with the American with Disabilities Act, if you need disability-related modifications or accommodations, including auxiliary aids or services, to participate in this meeting, please email [info@tuscanwaterdistrict.org](mailto:info@tuscanwaterdistrict.org) by Noon the day prior to this meeting.

Written material distributed during a public meeting will be available for public inspection at the meeting, if prepared by the district or a member of its legislative body, or after the meeting if prepared by some other person. Any materials related to an item on this Agenda are available for public inspection online at <https://www.tuscanwaterdistrict.org/>.

## ITEM 3

# Tuscan Water District Board Meeting Minutes

**Meeting Date: October 15, 2025**

Meeting Time: 9:00 a.m.

Location: BCAG Board Room, 326 Huss Drive, Chico, CA 95928

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### **Agenda Item 1: Call to Order Pledge of Allegiance**

Board Members Present:

- Rich McGowan, President
- Steve Koehnen, Vice President
- Andrew Mendonca, Treasurer
- Bill Chance
- Craig Knight
- Brian Mori
- Todd Turley

Board Members Absent:

- Rayme Antonowich
- James Paiva

Staff/Consultants:

- Tovey Giezentanner, General Manager
- Joe Hughes, District Counsel

Public Attendees:

- Christina Buck, Assistant Director, Butte County Water & Resource Conservation
- Dillon McGregor, Vina/Wyandotte Creek GSA Program Manager
- Anne Dawson, Vina GSA SHAC Member
- Jim Graydon, Vina GSA SHAC Member

### **Agenda Item 2: Public Comment**

No public comments were offered at the start of the meeting.

### **Agenda Item 3: Approval of Minutes (September 17, 2025)**

Motion: Turley. Second: Mendonca. Vote: Unanimous approval.

### **Agenda Item 4: Finances & Payment of the Bills**

The Board reviewed three invoices:

1. Giezentanner & Associates – \$7,500
  - Motion: Mendonca; Second: Turley – Approved unanimously.
2. Annual Facility Rental – \$165
  - Motion: Chance; Second: Koehnen – Approved unanimously.
3. District Counsel Invoice – \$1,580

## ITEM 3

- Counsel Hughes explained the applicability of AB 1234 ethics training requirements. Because TWD Board members receive no stipend or reimbursements, formal AB 1234 mandates do not strictly apply, but periodic Brown Act and ethics refreshers remain best practice.
- Motion: Turley; Second: Koehnen – Approved unanimously.

### **Agenda Item 5: DWR 2023 Vina Subbasin GSP Determination Letter**

Presentation by General Manager Giezentanner

Tovey reviewed the Department of Water Resources' 2023 determination letter approving the Vina Subbasin GSP and highlighted the framework it sets for the upcoming 5-year Plan Evaluation. Discussion focused on the basin's current conditions, the corrective actions required by DWR, and the role TWD will play over the next 12–15 months as the Vina and Rock Creek GSAs conduct their evaluation work.

#### Key Findings Presented

- Groundwater elevations are averaging approximately 18 feet above measurable objectives (MO) and 68 feet above minimum thresholds (MT).
- Long-term groundwater storage trends show an average increase of roughly 8,000 acre-feet per year over the past decade.
- The GSP reported no exceedance of minimum thresholds, and the subbasin remains on track to meet the 2027 milestone.
- No evidence of impacts to adjacent subbasins was identified.
- Groundwater quality indicators are within acceptable ranges.

#### Board Discussion

Topics included:

- Corrective Actions related to groundwater quality plumes—ensuring TWD projects do not exacerbate known contamination areas.
- The limitations of groundwater and streamflow modeling and the importance of observed monitoring data.
- The need to maintain caution against “regulatory drift” during the evaluation process.
- How TWD should articulate expectations for the Vina GSA, particularly regarding the number and justification of any proposed GSP amendments.
- Significant groundwater contributions to the Sacramento River shown in model outputs, and how this information may support future ISW discussions.
- The Board's desire that plan amendments be limited to only what is clearly necessary and supported by robust data.

#### Direction from the Board

Board consensus included:

- Minimize plan amendments unless strongly supported by verified data.
- Proceed with DWR-required data gap work but avoid premature policy shifts.
- Request clearer, structured documentation from consultants identifying proposed amendments and justification.
- Ensure both GSAs approve any amendment direction before moving forward.

## ITEM 3

- Tovey will continue leading coordination; an Ad Hoc Committee may be formed later if needed.

### Public Comment

Anne Dawson questioned the groundwater storage trend statement. Tovey cited the Vina GSA's 2024 Annual Basin Status Report showing the 10-year average increase of 8,000 AF/year.

## **Agenda Item 6 - General Manager Items**

### **6A. Draft Mission Statement**

A draft mission statement and the Prop 218 Engineer's Report Executive Summary were distributed. Directors will provide comments at the next meeting.

### **6B. Assessment Correspondence – Landowner Questions**

Tovey summarized two landowner inquiries regarding assessment applicability:

1. Wurlitzer property (~400 acres): Grazing and pistachio acreage.
2. Center for Natural Land Management: 60-acre conservation parcel on Butte Creek.

### Discussion clarified:

- The Prop 218 assessment applies equally per acre, as all acres benefit from the District's formation.
- The Engineer's Report does not allow exemptions based on land use.
- The only route to relief is detachment through LAFCo.
- Board direction:
  - Landowners should initiate detachment applications with LAFCo.
  - TWD will consider each detachment case-by-case when LAFCo requests District input.

### **6C. Domestic Well Inventory Update**

Tovey reviewed consultant findings:

- Approximately 4,200 well completion reports exist for the subbasin.
- Only about 2,100 include usable location data; many older wells are unmapped.
- New tools may help identify unmapped wells, but accuracy will remain limited.
- Board members emphasized:
  - Avoiding excessive resource use in areas with large data gaps.
  - Supporting a future domestic well registry, enabling owners to voluntarily provide accurate information.
  - Recognizing that many wells installed in the 1950s–70s are still functioning, despite missing records.

## ITEM 3

### Public Comment

- Jim Graydon encouraged TWD to assist the GSA in improving the domestic well inventory.
- Anne Dawson noted community hesitancy to disclose well details without clear benefits.
- Board members stressed that well protection requires well information—a registry may be the most practical solution.

### 6D. Interconnected Surface Waters (ISW) & Data Gaps Update

Tovey presented updated model outputs identifying gaining and losing stream reaches in the subbasin:

- Big Chico Creek and Butte Creek show losing reaches (groundwater feeding streams less than surface water losses).
- Pine Creek shows modeled gaining reaches; the Sacramento River shows a significant groundwater contribution (over 100,000 AF/year).
- These model outputs help prioritize future recharge projects and ISW policy discussions.

Christina Buck offered a reminder to “ground-truth” modeled gains, especially in seasonal streams like Mud Creek and Pine Creek, which go dry for several months each year.

Materials will be posted on the District website.

### **Agenda Item 7: Board Announcements / Future Agenda Items**

No new requests for future agenda items.

### **Adjournment**

President McGowan adjourned the meeting at approximately 10:37 a.m.

**ITEM 4**

**TWD Finances**

FY 2025-26	2025-26 APPROVED BUDGET (attached)	JUL 2025 Approved	AUG 2025 Approved	SEPT 2025	OCT 2025	NOV 2025	DEC 2025	JAN 2026	FEB 2026	MAR 2026	APR 2026	MAY 2026	JUN 2026	Billed to Date	Approved Budget Remaining
<b>TWD BUDGET CATEGORY</b>															
Personnel	\$ 266,400	\$ 7,500	\$ 7,500	\$ 7,500	\$ 7,500	\$ 7,500								\$ 30,000	\$ 236,400
Office	\$ 81,000	\$ 7,304	\$ 1,005	\$ 165	\$ 1,320									\$ 9,794	\$ 71,206
External Support	\$ 97,000	\$ 2,175	\$ 635	\$ 1,580	\$ 953									\$ 5,343	\$ 91,658
Litigation	\$ 75,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -									\$ -	\$ 75,000
Technical Support	\$ 50,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -									\$ -	\$ 50,000
Lobbying & Funding	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -									\$ -	\$ -
Reserves	\$ 50,000	\$ 17,399	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -									\$ 17,399	\$ 32,601
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>\$ 619,400</b>	<b>\$ 34,378</b>	<b>\$ 9,140</b>	<b>\$ 9,245</b>	<b>\$ 9,773</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ 62,535</b>	<b>\$ 556,865</b>							

**Itemized Bills: August 2025**

Category	Description	Amount
Personnel	Glezerhaner & Associates - General Manager	\$ 7,500
Office	BCAG - Invoices from Nov thru June 2026	\$ 1,320
External Support	Klein DeNatale Goldner - General Counsel	\$ 953
	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 9,773</b>

ITEM 4

# INVOICE

**Giezentanner & Associates**  
30 Independence Circle, Suite 300  
Chico, California 95973  
United States

**BILL TO**  
**Tuscan Water District**  
30 Independence Circle  
Chico, California 95973  
United States

**Invoice Number:** 20201292  
**Invoice Date:** October 31, 2025  
**Payment Due:** November 30, 2025

**Amount Due (USD): \$7,500.00**

Items	Quantity	Price	Amount
<p><b>Service</b> Professional Management and Consulting Services Service period October 2025, including comprehensive General Manager responsibilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Strategic oversight and compliance management for LAFCO Conditions of Approval, other regulatory requirements.</li> <li>* Development and implementation of financial strategies, budgeting, and fiscal oversight.</li> <li>* Preparation, coordination, and follow-up for Board of Directors meetings, ensuring strategic alignment and informed decision-making.</li> <li>* Facilitation of communication and collaboration among Board members, Ad Hoc Committees, and stakeholders.</li> <li>* Coordination with technical and engineering teams on recharge, surface water and demand conservation projects.</li> <li>* Coordination with various individuals, stakeholders and groups, including RCRD/Vina GSAs and staff, Butte County Department of Water &amp; Resource Conservation, among others.</li> </ul>	1	\$7,500.00	\$7,500.00

**Total:** \$7,500.00

**Amount Due (USD): \$7,500.00**

ITEM 4

BUTTE COUNTY ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS



326 Huss Drive, Ste. 150  
Chico, CA 95928  
Phone (530) 809-4616 Fax (530) 891-2979  
[www.BlineTransit.com](http://www.BlineTransit.com)

**INVOICE**

**DATE:** October 21, 2025  
**INVOICE #** 26039  
**FOR:** Transit Passes  
**FUND:** 7980  
**ACCOUNT:** Rents & Leases

**Bill To:**  
Tuscan Water District  
Attn: Tovey Giezentanner  
30 Indapendence Cir #300  
Chico ca 95973

DESCRIPTION	AMOUNT
Board Room/ Breakout Room Rental @ \$165 per day	
Reservation: Monthly Board Meeting - (FY 25-26 Billing)	
11/19/2025	\$165.00
12/17/2025	\$165.00
1/21/2026	\$165.00
2/18/2026	\$165.00
3/18/2026	\$165.00
4/15/2026	\$165.00
5/20/2026	\$165.00
6/17/2025	\$165.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1,320.00</b>

Checks should be made payable to Butte Regional Transit  
To ensure proper credit, please return copy of Invoice with your payment

October 31, 2025

TUSCAN WATER DISTRICT  
\*\*\*\*\*E-MAIL INVOICES\*\*\*\*\*

Invoice No. 1252404  
Client No. 24618  
Matter No. 001  
Billing Attorney: JDH

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**INVOICE SUMMARY**

**For Professional Services Rendered for the Period Ending: October 19, 2025.**

**RE: TUSCAN WATER DISTRICT  
GENERAL BUSINESS**

Professional Services	\$ 952.50
Costs Advanced	<u>\$ .00</u>
<b>TOTAL THIS INVOICE</b>	<b>\$ 952.50</b>

**ITEM 4**

**KLEIN DENATALE GOLDNER**

Invoice No. 1252404

October 31, 2025

**PROFESSIONAL SERVICES**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Init</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Hours</b>	<b>Amount</b>
9/22/25	AND	RESEARCHED GSP AMENDMENT AND REVIEW PROCESS; E-MAILED T. GIEZENTANNER REGARDING SAME.	.80	240.00
10/06/25	AND	REVIEWED AND RESPONDED TO E-MAIL FROM T. GIEZENTANNER REGARDING PROP. 218 ASSESSMENT.	.40	120.00
10/15/25	JDH	ATTENDED OCTOBER REGULAR BOARD MEETING.	1.50	592.50

**TOTAL PROFESSIONAL SERVICES \$ 952.50**

**SUMMARY OF PROFESSIONAL SERVICES**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Init</b>	<b>Rate</b>	<b>Hours</b>	<b>Total</b>
DOMINGUEZ, ALEX	AND	300.00	1.20	360.00
HUGHES, JOSEPH	JDH	395.00	1.50	592.50
<b>Total</b>			<b>2.70</b>	<b>\$ 952.50</b>

**TOTAL THIS INVOICE \$ 952.50**

ITEM 4

# Klein · DeNatale · Goldner

ATTORNEYS AT LAW

10000 STOCKDALE HWY, SUITE 200  
BAKERSFIELD, CA 93311  
(661) 395-1000  
FAX (661) 326-0418  
E-MAIL [accounting@kleinlaw.com](mailto:accounting@kleinlaw.com)

October 31, 2025

TUSCAN WATER DISTRICT  
\*\*\*\*\*E-MAIL INVOICES\*\*\*\*\*

Invoice No. 1252404  
Client No. 24618  
Matter No. 001  
Billing Attorney: JDH

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## REMITTANCE

RE: TUSCAN WATER DISTRICT  
GENERAL BUSINESS

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BALANCE DUE THIS INVOICE	\$ 952.50
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**All checks should be made payable to:**  
(Please return this advice with payment.)

Klein DeNatale Goldner  
10000 Stockdale Hwy, Suite 200  
Bakersfield, CA 93311

**For payment by ACH in USD:**  
(Please reference:  
Client-Matter No. 24618-001,  
Invoice No. 1252404)

J.P. Morgan Chase  
Account No. 825707620  
ABA No. 322271627

To pay by credit card, click here --->: [Pay Now](#) or call Accounting at (661) 395-1000.

## DUE UPON RECEIPT

FEDERAL I.D. No. 95-2298220

*Thank you! Your business is greatly appreciated.*

## ITEM 5

### AGENDA ITEM 5 – MISSION STATEMENT

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Tuscan Water District Board of Directors  
**FROM:** Tovey Giezentanner, General Manager  
**DATE:** November 19, 2025  
**SUBJECT:** Request for Board Input or Approval of Draft Mission Statement

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Attached for your consideration is the draft mission statement for the Tuscan Water District.

As a reminder, this draft language was circulated for your review at our October 15, 2025 board meeting, and copies were provided in the meeting packet. To date, I have not received any comments, edits, or suggested revisions from board members.

As we move into a period of significant engagement with the Vina and Rock Creek GSAs—and prepare for the 2027 GSP periodic evaluation—finalizing a clear, concise mission statement is both timely and important.

### **Purpose of the Mission Statement**

The draft mission statement is intended to reflect:

- Our statutory basis as a California Water District formed under Water Code §§ 34000 et seq.;
- Our core functions, including evaluating, funding, and implementing projects and management actions to support groundwater sustainability;
- The special benefits identified in the Prop 218 Engineer’s Report—local control, representation, funding advocacy, and protection of groundwater rights; and
- Our long-term commitment to landowners through cooperative, science-based resource planning and management.

A clearly adopted mission statement will also assist with communication to landowners, coordination with agencies, and alignment across District programs and priorities.

### **Request for Board Input or Approval**

I respectfully request:

1. Board review and feedback on the clarity, accuracy, and completeness of the draft;
2. Identification of any additional concepts or values that should be included; and
3. Direction on whether the Board is prepared to move toward formal adoption at this or an upcoming meeting.

Attachments:

- Draft Mission Statement
- Proposition 218 Executive Summary of District Formation and Special Benefits

## ITEM 5

### Tuscan Water District – Draft Mission Statement

#### Draft Mission Statement

The Tuscan Water District (TWD) is a locally governed California Water District dedicated to ensuring the long-term sustainability of groundwater resources within the Vina and Butte Subbasins. TWD's mission is to:

- Protect and enhance the beneficial use of groundwater for all landowners by implementing projects and management actions consistent with the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA);
- Represent and advocate for groundwater-dependent landowners in coordination with Butte County, the Vina, Butte, and Rock Creek Reclamation District GSAs, and other public agencies;
- Develop, fund, and operate surface-water supply, recharge, and conservation programs that improve basin conditions and preserve the region's agricultural and rural economy; and
- Defend local groundwater rights while pursuing cooperative, science-based solutions that sustain the Tuscan Aquifer for future generations.

#### Supporting Context

Statutory Basis: California Water Code §§ 34000 et seq.; LAFCo Resolution 18 (2022/23).

Core Functions: Evaluate, fund, implement, and oversee projects to achieve groundwater sustainability; serve as the implementing and funding partner to the GSAs.

Special Benefits Identified in the Engineer's Report: Local control, representation, funding advocacy, and protection of groundwater rights.

## ITEM 5

### REPORT SUMMARY

The Tuscan Water District (TWD or District) is a California water district recently formed to evaluate, fund, implement, and oversee projects and actions to achieve groundwater sustainability in the Vina and a portion of the Butte sub-basins. TWD also represents landowners for the purpose of working with the County of Butte; Butte County Water Commission; the Vina, Butte, and Rock Creek Reclamation District Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs); and other state and local agencies in the administration of Groundwater Sustainability Plans (GSP).

TWD seeks approval from landowners within its boundaries to implement an annual, land-based special benefit assessment, designed to generate sufficient revenue for ongoing district operations. This special benefit assessment will help ensure that TWD can perform its essential functions of sustainably managing groundwater resources under the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) thereby preserving and protecting groundwater resources for the benefit of all landowners within the TWD.

#### District Formation and Special Benefits

TWD encompasses predominantly prime agricultural land, where the landowners rely heavily on groundwater for irrigation and domestic water supply. Prior to the formation of TWD, no single entity had the legal authority or collective support necessary to pursue vital groundwater management projects and advocate for long-term sustainability.

With the establishment of TWD, each parcel within the District receives specific and direct special benefits, including:

- **Local Control:** A landowner-governed special district with exclusive authority to pursue and implement surface water projects, groundwater recharge initiatives, and demand reductions strategies aimed at achieving long-term groundwater sustainability for the Vina and Butte sub-basins.
- **Representation:** TWD landowners are represented in collaboration with Butte County, the Vina, Butte, and Rock Creek Reclamation District GSAs, and other state and local entities in the administration of GSPs.
- **Funding Advocacy:** The District advocates for TWD landowners by securing grants and other funding from local, state, or federal sources to support surface water projects, groundwater recharge initiatives, and demand reduction efforts, and other mitigation strategies – ultimately reducing the overall cost of SGMA compliance.
- **Protection of Groundwater Rights:** TWD defends landowners' access to groundwater against external threats, such as regulatory challenges and potential encroachments on groundwater rights.

These benefits justify the proposed special benefit assessment under Proposition 218, which allows local agencies to levy assessments for specific services that provide special benefits. Implementing a special benefit assessment for lands within the District ensures that revenue collection is aligned with the actual cost of providing district services, and it distributes the financial responsibility equitably among landowners.

## ITEM 6

### AGENDA ITEM 6 – PROPOSITION 4 READINESS

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Board of Directors, Tuscan Water District  
**FROM:** Tovey Giezentanner, General Manager  
**DATE:** November 19, 2025  
**SUBJECT:** Proposition 4 Readiness: Ad Hoc Committees and Near-Term Actions

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### I. Purpose

In November 2024, California voters approved Proposition 4, a \$10 billion statewide climate resilience bond that dedicates more than \$1.2 billion in its first year to water supply, groundwater recharge, flood management, and drought resilience programs. State agencies are using 2025–26 to finalize program guidelines and begin early awards, with the major competitive grant rounds for groundwater, recharge, conveyance, and multi-benefit flood projects expected to ramp up in 2026–27. This makes early project definition and “grant-ready” readiness essential for districts that want to compete in the first implementation cycles.

This gives us roughly 6-12 months to bring our priority projects to the level of definition, consensus, and technical readiness needed to compete for early implementation dollars. Proposition 4 is a once-in-a-generation investment in groundwater, flood-MAR, and conjunctive use. Our window to be competitive in 2026 and beyond is narrow—and our district is in a unique position to lead—but only if we prioritize and accelerate now.

This memo requests Board authorization for three specific near-term actions.

### II. Why Immediate Action Is Necessary

Several factors make the next 6-12 months critical for the Tuscan Water District:

#### 1. Proposition 4 is already moving—and early movers will capture the first wave of funding

The state has already appropriated \$3.47 billion in Year-1 funding, including \$1.199 billion for water, and has 15 projects under contract with more under review. Many programs (Groundwater Recharge, Regional Conveyance, Land Repurposing, Flood Control Subventions) will finalize guidelines during 2025–26, with major competitive solicitations expected to open in 2026–27. Agencies that enter those solicitations with fully formed concepts, partners, and preliminary engineering will capture the earliest and most substantial funding rounds.

## ITEM 6

### 2. Readiness and multi-party coordination are decisive scoring factors

DWR, DOC, and SWRCB programs will heavily weight:

- Project readiness (preliminary engineering, feasibility, conceptual design)
- Governance clarity (term sheets, MOUs, operational frameworks)
- Demonstrated coordination among GSAs, landowners, and partner agencies
- Integration with local plans such as the Recharge Action Plan

These elements take months of iterative effort. Districts that start in late 2026 will be competing against projects that have been maturing since early 2025 and before.

### 3. Our two highest-value opportunities each have long lead times

Both of TWD's priority initiatives—the Western Canal Water District surface water supply project and the Rock Creek/Keefer Slough recharge corridor—require multiple layers of work that cannot be completed quickly:

- Surface water project (WCWD):
  - Multi-year MOA / term sheet discussions
  - Permitting pathways (CEQA, NEPA, and potential U.S. Army Corps Section 408 implications for Cottonwood Creek improvements)
  - Infrastructure definition (e.g., 36-inch culverts, lift stations, metering, private wheeling arrangements)
  - Rate structure negotiations and Butte County Table A integration
- Rock Creek / Keefer Slough recharge corridor:
  - Multiple landowners with complex incentives
  - The Nicolaus property is nearing a permanent conservation easement, which would permanently foreclose detention/recharge options—making timing critical
  - Need for hydrologic/hydraulic modeling to quantify flood benefits
  - Coordination with RCRD GSA, Vina GSA, Butte County, and potential buyers/partners
  - Engineering definition to frame a Prop 4-ready multi-benefit project

These steps require travel, meetings, technical work, and negotiation cycles that must begin now to be meaningful by mid-2026.

### 4. Engineering bottlenecks statewide will intensify in 2026

As Prop 4 solicitations approach, public agencies across California will simultaneously compete for the same engineering firms, CEQA consultants, and hydrology modelers. Starting early—not in mid-2026—reduces the risk of delay and cost escalation.

## ITEM 6

### 5. The Vina Subbasin is already well-positioned—if we act quickly

The Vina Subbasin is exceptionally well positioned for Proposition 4 implementation because three foundational elements are already in place:

- **An approved Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP)**

The Vina GSP—approved by DWR in July 2023—includes surface water supply, in-lieu recharge, and flood-MAR concepts directly within its Projects & Management Actions (PMA) portfolio. These PMAs align closely with the major Proposition 4 funding programs for groundwater recharge, regional conveyance, flood control, and land repurposing.

- **A County-adopted Recharge Action Plan with a 20,000 AF/yr recharge target**

In February 2024, the Butte County Board of Supervisors adopted the Recharge Action Plan, which establishes a basin-wide goal of expanding average annual groundwater recharge by at least 20,000 acre-feet and identifies five specific implementation pathways, including:

- *“Spread out and Slow Down Flood Flows”*
- *“Manage Flows in Natural Channels to Increase Recharge”*
- *“Maximize Use of Existing and Underutilized Surface Water Supplies”*

These are detailed throughout the Plan (pages 8–14) and directly support concepts along Lindo Channel, Rock Creek, Keefer Slough, and the South Vina surface water corridor.

- **The newly formed Tuscan Water District (TWD)**

Created in 2024 expressly to implement surface water and groundwater sustainability projects, TWD provides the organizational vehicle that Proposition 4 programs expect: a local agency capable of serving as project proponent, executing agreements, and providing governance for multi-benefit projects.

Together, these elements place the Vina Subbasin ahead of many regions in California: the plan (GSP), the policy framework (Recharge Action Plan), and the implementation entity (TWD) already exist. Immediate action now allows TWD to capitalize on this alignment and compete strongly for early Proposition 4 funding rounds.

## ITEM 6

### III. Recommended Board Actions

#### 1. Establish an Ad Hoc Committee to Help Advance the Western Canal Surface Water Project

**Purpose:** Accelerate development of a surface water and conjunctive use package involving WCWD and the Vina Subbasin.

**Tasks:**

- Conduct a site visit to the Western Canal Water District system, Cottonwood Creek bottleneck, and proposed lift station locations.
- Meet with WCWD management and board representatives to begin negotiating a draft term sheet, addressing:
  - Water rate structure (outside-district pricing)
  - Wheeling terms
  - Water availability in non-cutback years (7 in 10 years)
  - Mechanisms for Table A wheeling through WCWD
  - Multi-year commitments and interruptible-supply provisions
- Identify constraints and permitting requirements (CEQA/NEPA/Section 408).
- Report back to the Board with a recommended governance and implementation structure for Prop 4 funding submittals.

**Rationale:**

The recently completed feasibility study identifies concrete infrastructure, permitting, and governance elements that must be advanced immediately to achieve grant-ready status.

#### 2. Establish an Ad Hoc Committee to Advance the Rock Creek & Keefer Slough Recharge Concept

**Purpose:** Develop a district-level concept for a multi-benefit recharge and flood-MAR corridor along Rock Creek and Keefer Slough.

**Tasks:**

- Conduct site visits to multiple properties to assess detention basin feasibility.
- Coordinate initial discussions with:
  - RCRD GSA
  - Vina GSA
  - Landowners
  - Butte County (as needed)
- Develop a preliminary governance concept and term sheet identifying:
  - Recharge operations strategy
  - Landowner participation structure
  - Flood-benefit allocation

## ITEM 6

- Potential for regional block-grant alignment (e.g., §91013 land repurposing)
- If the Board approves Item 3 below, assist in soliciting buyer/partner interest to preserve opportunities before a permanent conservation easement forecloses them.

### **Rationale:**

At least one key landowner is close to recording a conservation easement, which would eliminate a central opportunity for regional flood mitigation and recharge. Time is a critical factor.

### **3. Approve a Funding Request to Support Preliminary Engineering for Rock Creek/Keefer Slough**

#### **Request:**

Authorize hiring an engineering firm for up to \$10,000 to prepare a concise project description and preliminary engineering assessment for the Rock Creek / Keefer Slough recharge and flood-detention multi-benefit project concept.

Timing is critical for two reasons. First, one of the key properties—the 250-acre Nicolaus parcel—is reportedly in the final stages of a permanent conservation easement, which would preclude future conversion to a flood-detention basin or recharge facility. If that easement is recorded before we present a technically credible project concept, the opportunity for a multipurpose regional project in this corridor may be permanently lost. Second, the Vina GSA’s SGMA-funded recharge evaluations will not be completed until Q2 2026, leaving a significant gap between now and the opening of Proposition 4 implementation solicitations.

Preparing a professional engineering summary now will give TWD the ability to (1) engage landowners and potential buyers with a clear depiction of the flood-mitigation and recharge benefits, (2) preserve optionality on high-value parcels before decisions are irreversible, and (3) position TWD with the early project definition required for Prop 4 readiness.

#### **Purpose of the work:**

- Create a professional, credible, and technically grounded project description to support:
  - Landowner negotiations
  - Buyer/partner outreach
  - 2026 Prop 4 grant readiness
  - Integration with the County’s Recharge Action Plan
- Conduct hydrologic/hydraulic modeling demonstrating flood-risk reduction benefits—critical for §91021 and §91012 scoring.
- Preserve the Nicolaus property as a viable site for detention, MAR, and regional flood benefits before conservation easements foreclose the option.

## ITEM 6

### IV. Conclusion

Proposition 4 will reward agencies that:

- Move quickly
- Present unified regional visions
- Build technical readiness early
- Demonstrate concrete commitments among partners

The next 6-12 months are critical. By establishing the two recommended ad hoc committees and authorizing preliminary engineering work on the Rock Creek / Keefer Slough recharge corridor project, TWD positions itself to submit credible, competitive, and well-governed projects when implementation funds open in 2026.

### Linked Resources / Attachments:

- [Rock Creek – Keefer Slough Corridor Concept](#)
- [WCWD Surface Water Project Analysis](#)
- [Butte County Recharge Action Plan](#)
- [Proposition 4 – CA Natural Resources Agency Bond Accountability Site](#)
- [Proposition 4 – LAO – The 2025-26 CA Spending Plan for Prop 4](#)