

From: [Pamela Smithers](#)
To: [MeetingClerk](#)
Subject: public comment re sept 11 TAG meeting
Date: Thursday, September 11, 2025 10:01:48 AM

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please distribute my public comment below to TAG in advance of today's meeting, thank you!

Groundwater Technical Advisory Group,

Thank you for taking my public comment on the issue of groundwater sustainability.

As a member of WICC for over a decade, I have followed the groundwater sustainability issue since the first groundwater sustainability report to the State Water Control Board years ago. I find the fact that groundwater extraction targets have not been met in the last 6 of 7 years (as per the most recent annual groundwater report) alarming.

A collection of technical experts gathered by the County set a standard for a sustainable yield for groundwater, 15,000 AY, and *the ag industry has not been able to meet this target*. Their response to this (via Napa County Winegrowers) is to suggest that the target is wrong. To suggest that the target is wrong, because the users have not been able to meet the target voluntarily, would be funny if not for the seriousness of the issue. The target is not wrong. What isn't working is the *voluntary nature* of the extraction reductions needed. What we have here is the beginning of a tragedy of the commons. No one wants to use less groundwater unless others are also compelled to do so. Therefore, we are currently in a race to the bottom.

The sustainable target set by technical experts determined what it will take *over time* to set our county groundwater on a sustainable path (by ~2040). The fact that this target of pumping has exceeded the sustainable yield in 6 of the last 7 years means that the voluntary efforts at conservation are not working and metering of well extractions or some other action must be considered.

We have had a couple of good rain years (good, relatively speaking) and now some are pulling out their vines due to industry woes. Maybe the reduction of use due to pulling out of vines will mean the target will be met next year. On the flip side, however, is climate change/increasing temperatures (but again, this summer temps were good to us which may result in less pumping). *What we cannot do at this point is increase the amount of extraction allowed*. That's the exact opposite of the reaction needed. The failure to meet the sustainable yield target, i.e. the over pumping of groundwater. means that voluntary measures are not working and other measures must finally be considered.

This "undesirable result" in the category of groundwater pumping is just that: an undesirable result. Groundwater is a long game. Please protect all users of our precious groundwater and take appropriate action to reduce over extraction. The ag industry is not the only stakeholder. I urge you to hold some meetings for the general public (evening library meetings) to review these undesirable results and discuss how we, as a county, are going to get to a sustainable groundwater situation in Napa County, for all.

Thank you for your time.

Pam Smithers

WICC board member since 2014

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