



## **Madera County Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs) After Proposition 218 Fee FAQs**

### **Q: What is the rate, and will it ever be lowered?**

The rates are currently \$246 per enrolled acre in the Madera Subbasin, County GSA and \$138 dollars per enrolled acre in the Delta-Mendota Subbasin, County GSA. Rates will likely be reevaluated after the first year, and after each successive year, based on project implementation outlook, which may result in a reduction in rates. Every 3-5 years, it is likely that a new rate study will be conducted.

### **Q: What is this fee for?**

In the Madera Subbasin, County GSA, this fee pays for projects, including large-scale recharge, participation in Sites Reservoir, land repurposing, and domestic well mitigation. In the Delta-Mendota, County GSA, this fee pays for land repurposing.

### **Q: When will this fee take effect?**

The fee is in effect as of July 1, 2022. You will see 50% on your Fall 2022 property tax bills and 50% on your Spring 2023 property tax bill.

### **Q: Why is each subbasin charged differently?**

The costs in each subbasin are different based on specific projects and programs and the amount of irrigated acreage in each subbasin.

### **Q: Where does the money go after it is collected, and how is it distributed to each project in each subbasin?**

The monies get put into separate subbasin revenue funds allocated to projects only in that subbasin.

### **Q: When will the projects begin?**

The Board must approve and develop rules for each project. It is anticipated that these projects will begin sometime in early 2023 with rule development from July – December 2022. There are currently ongoing grant projects for recharge.





**Q: What happens to the fee after the 5-year schedule?**

It is anticipated that a new rate study would be conducted in three to five years. Absent a new rate study, the year five rates would remain in effect.

**Q: Sustainable Agricultural Land Conservation (SALC) – Because an annual enrollment is required, is there an end to this project?**

Rules for SALC are being developed over the next six months, with the Board, but the SALC program could continue through 2040.

**Q: Since these projects have yet to begin, why are we being charged in advance?**

While project planning can be funded by the GSA administrative fee, it is crucial that the funding is in place to begin construction and implementation once planning work is completed. Implementing fees immediately also allows for the amortization of the fees based on the estimated cost of projects, which lowers the overall annual fees per acre.

**Q: I am in the Chowchilla Subbasin (in which fee had majority protest). What should I expect?**

You still have an allocation, the GSA administrative fee of approximately \$25, and potential penalties adopted by the Madera County Board of Supervisors. The Madera County GSA for the Chowchilla Subbasin will not have funding for projects in the Chowchilla Subbasin through rates. Any projects that may be completed will need to be funded through grants, revenue generated from penalties, or in-kind work.

**Q: If I remove acres, how will the 218 and GSA administrative fee affect me?**

If you remove acres from your farm unit, you can access the water for those acres and you would still pay both fees. If you remove acres and enroll them in SALC, you would still pay the fee but would also receive a payment for SALC. We are currently working on an Opt-Out process for farmers who no longer want to farm on their property and do not want to use SALC or access the water. The rules and procedures have not been put in place and information will be sent out once it has been approved by the Board of Supervisors.

**Q: What if I overpump?**

Allocations are currently in place. If you use more than your allocation, you will have a penalty. Penalties have not been adopted by the board, but penalties could range from \$500/AF over the allocation plus additional penalties and fees as authorized by SGMA.

