

WATER AND RESOURCE CONSERVATION

308 Nelson Avenue, Oroville, CA 95965

Telephone: (530) 538-4343

Fax: (530) 538-3807

www.buttecounty.net/waterandresource

bcwater@buttecounty.net

Paul Gosselin, Director

August 7, 2013

Hon. Stephen E. Benson, Presiding Judge
c/o Court Administration
Superior Court of California, County of Butte
One Court Street, Oroville, CA 95965

FILED
Superior Court of California
County of Butte
AUG 09 2013
Kimberly Fiener, Clerk
By Deputy

Re: Response to the 2012-2013 Grand Jury Report

Dear Judge Benson:

Please find below the responses to the 2012-2013 Grand Jury Report in accordance with Penal Code Sections 933 and 933.05. The Department of Water and Resource Conservation appreciates the long hours and diligence of the members of the Grand Jury in investigating, researching and reviewing water issues.

FINDINGS

F1: The water resources of Butte County continue to be the focus of an ever increasing demand statewide.

Response: The respondent agrees with the finding.

F3: Butte County currently has the option of using or leasing its Table A water which currently provides a revenue source to the county general fund.

Response: The respondent agrees with the finding.

F4: The City of Chico is 100% reliant on the Tuscan Aquifer for its water

Response: The respondent agrees with the finding.

F5: In Butte County, the Lower Tuscan Aquifer groundwater elevation has dropped 13 feet or more over the last 20 years.

Response: The respondent agrees with the finding.

F6: A report on the Lower Tuscan Aquifer is scheduled to be completed in June 2013 by the Butte County Department of Water and Resource Conservation.

Response: The respondent agrees with the finding.

F12: The Butte County Department of Water and Resource Conservation has not received any required permit requests for groundwater pumping as a substitute for surface water exported and sold outside the county.

Response: The respondent agrees with the finding.

F14: The Butte County Department of Water and Resource Conservation study of the Tuscan Aquifer may yield a future strategy to halt the decline of the aquifer.

Response: The respondent agrees with the finding.

RECOMMENDATIONS

R2: The Butte County Department of Water and Resource Conservation needs to work closely with DWR to protect county Area of Origin water rights.

Response: The recommendation has been implemented. The protection of Area of Origin and County of Origin water rights is a long held policy of Butte County. Most recently, it was included as a policy in the 2030 General Plan. However, Area of Origin water rights remain an unsettled legal term. Butte County and those that support Area of Origin water right protections often are at odds with state and federal agencies and other interests. The Department understands the intent of the recommendation, but would like to acknowledge that the protection of Area of Origin water rights requires a constant monitoring of state and federal policies, programs and legislation that would erode Area of Origin water rights and the willingness to take appropriate measures to assure that those protections remain intact.

R3: The Butte County Department of Water and Resource Conservations needs to explore strategies to fully utilize the Table A Water allocations for the benefit of Butte County.

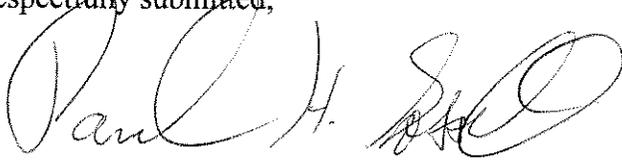
Response: The recommendation has been implemented. In 2010, the Department prepared for the Board of Supervisors a strategy for fully utilizing the Table A Water allocation. The most immediate action was to transform the Table A allocation from a fiscal liability to a sustainable asset for the County. The County has achieved that objective. Implementing strategies that will fully utilize the Table A allocation within the County will be a longer term venture. However,

actions to identify the most viable options are being conducted. One of these options involves assisting the California Water Service on their feasibility study that is evaluating options of utilizing the Table A allocation in the Chico area.

R4: The Butte County Department of Water and Resource Conservation should continue to study the Tuscan Aquifer and keep the public informed of the findings.

Response: The recommendation has been implemented. One of the Department's core responsibilities includes evaluating, assessing and reporting groundwater conditions. Additionally, special project studies will be implemented based on available funding. In the 2013-14 fiscal year budget, the Board of Supervisors allocated resources for the Department to conduct water resource research as outlined in the Water Resource Protection and Sustainability Project.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul H. Gosselin". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with some loops and flourishes.

Paul H. Gosselin, Director