



## **Proposition 218 Election Frequently Asked Questions**

### **What is the Greater Kaweah Groundwater Sustainability Agency?**

The Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) is a State law requiring better management and balance of groundwater supplies. The law requires groundwater subbasins be sustainable by the year 2040 through the creation of local Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs). In response to this law, the Greater Kaweah GSA was formed in 2016 and is responsible for implementing a Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) that describes local groundwater issues and identifies appropriate solutions.

### **What is Proposition 218?**

Proposition 218 is a Constitutional Initiative approved by the voters of California in November 1996 which requires new or increased assessments to be approved by affected landowners.

### **What am I being asked to do?**

You will be asked in a special mail election to vote on an assessment to fund Greater Kaweah GSA's administrative, planning and monitoring needs. Ballots will be mailed out in March 2021 and must be received by the close of the Public Hearing scheduled for May 10, 2021.

### **Why is the Greater Kaweah GSA going through this process?**

An assessment is necessary to cover the costs to follow the requirements of SGMA. As an unfunded California law, the costs to implement a Groundwater Sustainability Plan and administer a new agency (Greater Kaweah GSA) will be borne by local landowners.

### **How much would the assessment be?**

The Greater Kaweah GSA Board has adopted a not to exceed rate level of \$10.00 per acre land-based assessment. If the election is successful, the Board will review the financial need annually and set an assessment accordingly up to the \$10.00 per acre level.

### **Who would be assessed, and will it be done equally?**

All assessable parcels within the Greater Kaweah GSA would be levied up to but not exceeding the \$10.00 per acre maximum, excluding parcels that are smaller than four acres. Government owned parcels, public right-of-way (roads and highways), and parcels not entirely within Greater Kaweah GSA's boundary are also excluded. Assessed parcels are reviewed as recipients of the oversight services of the GSA and therefore will be assessed equally as a single customer class.



**Will lands within cities and communities be assessed?**

Lands within cities and communities of Goshen, Exeter, Farmersville, Hanford, Ivanhoe, Visalia, and Woodlake would at this time not be assessed due to their minimal groundwater extraction.

**What costs does the assessment cover?**

The assessment revenues are needed to fund agency administration, Groundwater Sustainability Plan administrative implementation and updates, and efforts to respond and comply with SGMA. It is anticipated there will be additional costs for the implementation of projects and management actions, but they are not included under this proposed assessment.

**Can revenue be generated through other means?**

Part of the expenses from the GKGSA formation, submittal and early implementation of the GSP have been funded from several large grants. The Greater Kaweah GSA has and will continue to apply for grants to support its work. In addition to landowner assessments, groundwater extraction fees or other revenue generating measures may be considered in the future but would not be authorized by this election.

**How does the Greater Kaweah GSA control costs?**

The Greater Kaweah GSA Board has minimized expenses where it can by mostly using member agency staff, assistance from community volunteers, and reducing the use of consultants whenever possible.

**How is the Agency's Board accountable to the public regarding expenditures?**

The Board adopts an annual budget and reviews and authorizes payment of expenses at regular public meetings. The Greater Kaweah GSA is audited annually by an independent accounting firm. The Greater Kaweah GSA Board is also advised by several technical and representative stakeholder committees that give a local voice to landowners in implementation of the GSP and associated costs.

**How would I pay the assessment?**

The assessment will be included on your county property tax bill.

**When would the assessment take effect?**

The assessment will be included on county tax rolls beginning in Fiscal Year 2021-22.



### **Will the assessment end?**

The proposed assessment reflects a 6-year budget on which the assessment is based. Other funding sources may be obtained at some time in the future that may reduce or take the place of the proposed assessment. The Board must conduct another election if a change in assessment rate or structure is deemed necessary.

### **How was the assessment determined?**

An Engineer's Report required by law was prepared by a registered professional engineer. To determine the amount to be assessed the engineer had to follow several requirements, not the least of which is that the rate must substantiate a special benefit to the landowner and cannot exceed the reasonable cost of the special benefit associated with that parcel.

### **What are other GSAs in our area doing to raise funds?**

GSAs in other groundwater subbasins, including in nearby Kings and Tulare Lake subbasins, have passed or are contemplating similar Proposition 218 elections.

### **What are the objectives that guided the rate design?**

The proposed rate was designed with the objective to ensure the Greater Kaweah GSA's expenditures are truly necessary and the costs are allocated in a fair and equitable manner. Based on the objectives, the Proposition 218 proposes revenues to fund the administration as well as technical requirements of Groundwater Sustainability Plan management and implementation including subbasin coordination, monitoring, and reporting under SGMA.

### **How and when do I cast my ballot?**

Ballots will be mailed the week of March 15, 2021 to the most recent addresses on file with Tulare and Kings counties. Ballots will be mailed to each landowner, and if a landowner owns more than one parcel, the ballot will contain each assessor's parcel number (APN) currently on file with the counties. Voting is weighted based on the assessable acres for each parcel as a proportionate share of the total acreage in ballots received. If ballots are hand delivered or sent by mail, they must be received no later than the conclusion of the public hearing that starts at 1:00 p.m. on May 10, 2021.

### **How do I receive more information about the proposed assessment?**

The easiest and fastest way to stay up to date on Proposition 218 election information is by signing up for our interested persons email distribution list which is linked to from the front page of [greaterkaweahgsa.org](http://greaterkaweahgsa.org). The Greater Kaweah GSA will continue to provide information via its website. You may also email [info@greaterkaweahgsa.org](mailto:info@greaterkaweahgsa.org) or call (559) 302-9987. We



invite you to attend upcoming stakeholder committee and Board Meetings. Meeting information can be found on our website. Greater Kaweah GSA Board of Directors will hold a public hearing on the proposed rate 1:00 p.m. on May 10, 2021 in person and via Zoom teleconference.