



## MEMORANDUM

DATE: April 4, 2025  
TO: Vina GSA Board  
FROM: Christina Buck, Assistant Director  
RE: Consideration of Amendment to Grant Agreement 4600015664

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In Spring 2024 the Vina Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) signed a grant agreement for \$5.535 million through the Department of Water Resources (DWR) Sustainable Groundwater Management (SGM) Grant Program. The grant agreement specifies seven components in its Work Plan, each with associated tasks and deliverables that the funds will support.

Component 1: Grant Agreement Administration  
Component 2: GSP Updates, Data Gaps, and Outreach  
Component 3: Demand Reduction Strategies in the Vina Subbasin  
Component 4: Lindo Channel Surface Water Recharge  
Component 5: Surface Water Supply and Recharge Feasibility Study  
Component 6: Inter-basin Coordination, Modeling and Reporting  
Component 7: Outreach Program

The executed grant agreement is available from the Vina GSA webpage:

[https://www.vinagsa.org/files/a15fe158b/Executed\\_4600015664\\_DWR+Agreement\\_Vina+GSA.pdf](https://www.vinagsa.org/files/a15fe158b/Executed_4600015664_DWR+Agreement_Vina+GSA.pdf)

### Background

The overarching goal of the Vina Subbasin grant-funded projects is to identify the most cost-effective combination of strategies to reduce the groundwater deficit while delivering long-term benefits for the subbasin and Butte County. All projects are currently in the planning or feasibility phase.

Changing conditions and stakeholder input has informed a proposed shift in funding priorities for this grant:

- DWR has clarified that grant funds cannot be used for direct incentive payments to landowners for participation in the Extend Orchard Replacement (EOR) pilot program.
- Recent market conditions, including sustained low walnut prices, have led to a reduction in irrigated acreage, providing an opportunity to frame the EOR program using case studies rather than financial incentives through a pilot program.

- Staff and the Board have received public comments communicating a strong interest in increasing investments in monitoring infrastructure (e.g., groundwater wells, stream gages)
- The Water Supply and Recharge project (Component 5) has identified promising opportunities for increasing surface water use in the subbasin and positive landowner engagement has supported the identification of several sites where recharge concepts can be explored and better understood through field investigation, monitoring, and data collection. Both the water supply feasibility and recharge investigations would benefit from additional funds.

As a result, staff recommends the Demand Reduction Strategies (DRS) project (Component 3) shift from implementing a pilot program to a reduced-scope approach with case studies to develop the EOR and Precision Irrigation programs. Pilot program implementation funds from Component 3 could shift to Components 2 and 5 to better reflect interests and priorities of stakeholders in the subbasin.

### Proposed Amendment

Staff proposes reallocating about **\$1.1 million** from Component 3 (DRS) as follows:

- **\$300,000 to Component 2 (Data Gaps Project)** to expand groundwater monitoring, stream gaging, and potentially support further refinement of the domestic well database.
- **\$800,000 to Component 5 (Water Supply and Recharge Project)** to advance Water Supply Feasibility and expand recharge site assessments, field investigations, and pilot project activities.

DWR has indicated an amendment is feasible if we remain within the scope of existing components and tasks. Staff's proposal reflects a responsive and efficient reallocation of resources to maximize implementation while remaining within the approved work plan. Time is of the essence, as the grant has a hard deadline of March 2026. All project activities must be completed within that timeline.

### SHAC Discussion and Recommendation

At its recent meeting on March 26, 2025, the Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SHAC) reviewed and discussed this proposal:

- Staff provided background on the evolution of the DRS project and stakeholder input favoring investment in monitoring and water supply/recharge solutions.
- SHAC members supported the proposal and raised the following points:
  - The question was raised whether the Lindo Channel project may benefit from additional funding. Staff responded that due to other efforts at the 5-mile diversion, additional analysis of the Lindo Channel recharge concept beyond the current scope of work is not needed at this time.
  - Other grant programs such as SWEEP support irrigation efficiency, making it appropriate to reallocate SGM grant funds to Components 2 and 5.
  - Additional funding could help navigate complex permitting and regulatory issues, and support pilot recharge demonstration.
  - Interest was expressed in dedicating ~\$50,000 to improve the domestic well database.
  - Request for additional detail on the use of the \$300K and \$800K at a future meeting.
- Public comment noted the need for a stream gage at Rose Avenue Bridge.

A motion was made for reallocating \$300,000 to Component 2, \$200,000 to Component 4, and \$600,000 to Component 5. The motion did not receive a second.

**SHAC Recommendation:** The SHAC unanimously recommended the Board reallocate \$300,000 to Component 2 and \$800,000 to Component 5, with further information on specific uses of funds to be presented and discussed at the next meeting.

### [Amendment Authorization](#)

With the Board's approval, staff will coordinate with DWR to execute the amendment. The Authorizing Resolution for Accepting Funds, approved by the Board on November 9, 2022, authorizes the Butte County Director of Water and Resource Conservation, administrator of the Vina GSA, or designee to sign the grant agreement and any future amendments.

### [Requested Action](#)

Approve reallocating \$1.1 million from Component 3 - Demand Reduction Strategies to Component 2-GSP Updates, Data Gaps, and Outreach and Component 5 - Surface Water Supply and Recharge Feasibility Study.