



March 7, 2023

Kamie Loeser, Director
Butte County Department of Water and Resource Conservation
308 Nelson Avenue
Oroville, California 95965

Re: Multi-Benefit Land Repurposing Grant Application

Dear Ms. Loeser:

Butte County Farm Bureau (BCFB) is a non-profit grass roots organization whose purpose is to protect and promote agricultural interests throughout Butte County and the state of California and to find solutions to the challenges of the farm, the farm home, and the rural community. BCFB is part of California's largest farm organization, the California Farm Bureau Federation, which is comprised of 53 county farm bureaus representing 28,000 members in 56 counties.

BCFB strives to protect and improve the ability of farmers and ranchers engaged in production agriculture to provide a reliable supply of food and fiber through responsible stewardship of California's resources.

We submit this letter to express our commitment and support for the Vina Groundwater Sustainability Agency's (Vina GSA) Multi-Benefit Land Repurposing grant application to develop a land repurposing program which will benefit communities and agricultural land impacted by extreme drought and the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA). BCFB is committed to doing its part to work toward better groundwater management to ensure sustainability and water supply resiliency consistent with SGMA.

BCFB is available and willing to provide the following services/deliverables accounting for more than \$100,000 of the project budget to support the Vina GSA's efforts, as anticipated by the grant application:

- Produce and distribute media articles and other related content to our 1,100 bi-monthly newsletter and 1,800 monthly e-news recipients, nearly 3,000 Facebook followers, and nearly 2,000 Instagram followers about upcoming events.
- Identify, collaborate, and plan regularly schedule public meetings within Butte County.
- Identify, collaborate, and meet with small groups and individual landowners.
- Assist in media production, as necessary.
- Assist in managing remote conference and workshop sessions.

- Utilize our staff resources as necessary to ensure the success of the multi-benefit land repurposing program.

Achieving groundwater sustainability will be challenging for growers within the Vina Subbasin. The local farmers, ranchers and the County are committed to meeting the challenge but doing so successfully will require using every tool possible to develop “outside the box” alternatives to avoid economic dislocation. Unfortunately, SGMA is still relatively new, and enactment and implementation has been more of a “learn as you go” process, therefore many of the tools needed to successfully manage groundwater are still being discovered and developed. We believe that a multi-benefit land repurposing program is one of these such tools.

The Vina GSA proposal builds on planning work already done as part of the development of the Vina Subbasin’s Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP). In fact, one of the projects identified in the Vina GSA GSP’s Projects and Management Actions (PMA) is the Extend Orchard Replacement project, which would utilize various funding sources to incentivize local growers to increase the duration of their current fallowing practice between orchard removal and replanting. The extra time would allow the soil to fallow and decrease the overall demand on groundwater and other water sources. The goal of this program as envisioned in the GSP is to fallow between 1,600 and 3,200 acres per year in the North and South Vina Management Areas, and the estimated groundwater offset and/or recharge from this program would be between 4,000 and 8,000 acre-feet per year.

Unlike other areas of the Central Valley, the Vina GSA and farmers in the Vina Subbasin do not anticipate fallowing large swaths of farmland to achieve groundwater sustainability. At the same time, repurposing the least viable ag land for multiple benefits is an important part of the groundwater management toolbox and there is an important role for temporary and permanent multibenefit land repurposing solutions in the Vina Subbasin.

While shovel-ready land repurposing projects are not identified in the application, the Vina GSA proposal will use a bottom-up community approach to engage farmers and ranchers throughout the Vina Subbasin to develop a multibenefit agricultural land repurposing plan, through which we will identify and priority temporary and permanent land repurposing strategies and specific projects for implementation within the Subbasin.

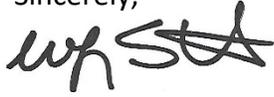
Once developed, we believe our plan will become a model for other Upper Sacramento Valley Subbasins with high concentrations of tree and other permanent crops as they also strive to comply with SGMA while protecting their valued agricultural resources.

BCFB is excited to collaborate with Butte County, Vina GSA, Rock Creek Reclamation District GSA, Agricultural Groundwater Users of Butte County, Family Water Alliance, and other stakeholders to further the available resources for the communities within Butte County. We feel that each partner’s strengths and contributions will combine to form a program that is able to serve landowners and communities while providing community health, economic wellbeing,

water supply, habitat, renewable energy, and climate benefits, and recognize that working together will help maximize grant dollar efficiencies.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Walt Stile". The signature is written in a cursive, somewhat stylized font.

Walt Stile
President
Butte County Farm Bureau



March 8, 2023

Kamie Loeser, Director
Butte County Department of Water and Resource Conservation
308 Nelson Avenue
Oroville, California 95965

Re: Multi-Benefit Land Repurposing Grant Application

Dear Ms. Loeser:

Rock Creek Reclamation District is writing to express our support for the Vina Groundwater Sustainability Agency's (Vina GSA) Multi-Benefit Land Repurposing grant application to develop a land repurposing program which will benefit communities and agricultural land impacted by severe drought and the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA).

Rock Creek Reclamation District (RCRD) was formed in 1985 to provide flood control and drainage services in northern Butte County. Additionally, RCRD serves as the Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) for the area within its boundaries. As one of the two GSAs covering the Vina Subbasin, RCRD GSA is working jointly with the Vina GSA to submit a single plan for the Vina Subbasin. RCRD remains committed to doing its part to work toward better groundwater management to ensure sustainability and water supply resiliency consistent with SGMA.

Since its inception, RCRD has worked extensively with Butte County, the Vina GSA, and other stakeholders in Butte County as our community has worked to comply with the requirements of SGMA. This history creates a solid basis for RCRD to participate in developing a local multibenefit land repurposing program if this grant application is successful.

As a grant partner, RCRD will work with Vina GSA on three elements of developing and implementing a local multibenefit land repurposing program. First, RCRD will provide input on the design of the program. As an important representative of its members, RCRD is well situated to contribute perspective and technical expertise of value to developing a multibenefit land repurposing program that works for farmers. Second, RCRD will facilitate engagement of farmers and other stakeholders in the process of designing the program. Third, once the program is developed, RCRD will conduct outreach on the program's opportunities and benefits. This will include workshops, small group meetings, individual conversations, as well as technical assistance on program participation.



**Rock Creek
Reclamation District**

5130 Anita Rd, Chico CA 95973
rockcreekreclamation.com

To support RCRD's participation, the Vina GSA grant includes a budget of \$75,000 divided equally among the three elements described above. These funds are important to ensuring that RCRD has sufficient resources to partner with Vina GSA in engaging the local community in designing and implementing the program.

Thank you for including Rock Creek Reclamation District GSA as a partner in Vina GSA's application for the Multibenefit Land Repurposing Program Grant. Farmers in the Vina Subbasin are facing significant challenges. A focused multibenefit land repurposing program would ease the burden of SGMA on local farmers while ensuring that the land remains productive and provides multiple benefits for our community.

Sincerely

Hal Crain

Chairman of the Board of Trustees

Rock Creek Reclamation District



March 8, 2023

Kamie Loeser, Director
Butte County Department of Water and Resource Conservation
308 Nelson Avenue
Oroville, California 95965

Re: Vina GSA, Agenda Item 6.2: Consideration of a Resolution Authorizing an Application for the CA Department of Conservation Multi-Benefit Land Repurposing Grant Program

Dear Ms. Loeser:

The Agricultural Groundwater Users of Butte County is writing to express support for the Vina Groundwater Sustainability Agency's (Vina GSA) Multi-Benefit Land Repurposing grant application to develop a land repurposing program which will benefit communities and agricultural land impacted by severe drought and the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA).

AGUBC is a 501(c)(6) organization representing more than 56,000 acres of farmland in the Vina Subbasin not currently represented by other eligible local agencies as part of the SGMA process. Since forming in 2017, AGUBC has worked extensively with Butte County, the Vina GSA, and other stakeholders in Butte County to comply with the requirements of SGMA. AGUBC's members are large and small, and we represent landowners with agricultural and domestic groundwater wells within the Subbasin. This history creates a solid basis for the AGUBC to be one of the Vina GSA's partners in developing a local multibenefit land repurposing program if this grant application is successful.

As a grant partner, AGUBC will work with Vina GSA on three elements of developing and implementing a local multibenefit land repurposing program. First, AGUBC will provide input on the design of the program. As an important representative of its members, AGUBC is well situated to contribute perspective and technical expertise of value to developing a multibenefit land repurposing program that works for farmers. Second, AGUBC will facilitate engagement of farmers and other stakeholders in the process of designing the program. Third, once the program is developed, AGUBC will conduct outreach on the program's opportunities and benefits. This will include workshops, small group meetings, individual conversations, as well as technical assistance on program participation.

Letter to Vina GSA

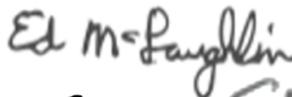
March 8, 2023

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To support AGUBC's participation, the Vina GSA grant includes a budget of \$100,000 divided equally among the three elements described above. These funds are important to ensuring that AGUBC has sufficient resources to partner with Vina GSA in engaging the local community in designing and implementing the program.

Thank you for including AGUBC as a partner in Vina GSA's application for the Multibenefit Land Repurposing Program Grant. Farmers in the Vina Subbasin are facing significant challenges. A focused multibenefit land repurposing program would ease the burden of SGMA on local farmers while ensuring that the land remains productive and provides multiple benefits for our community.

Sincerely,



Rich McGowan, Ed McLaughlin, Darren Rice, Steve Koehnen, Todd Turley
AGUBC Board of Directors