



# California Regional Water Quality Control Board Central Valley Region

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## SUMMARY OF SECOND PUBLIC CONSULTATION MEETING

### **Groundwater Beneficial Use Designations in the Hodson/Littlejohns Fault Zone Area, Calaveras County**

Due to the low turnout of local participants at the early public consultation/scoping meeting held in Stockton on 23 June 2011, and subsequent emerging public interest, staff from the Central Valley Water Board held a second public consultation meeting on 20 August 2011 in Copperopolis. The purpose of the second meeting was to explain the scope of the proposed project and to solicit and discuss public comments and concerns regarding the proposed project.

The proposed project would amend the Sacramento River and San Joaquin River Basin Plan to revise groundwater beneficial use designations beneath the Royal Mountain King Mine (RMKM) site. The de-designations would occur in areas with naturally high levels of salinity, in accordance with the State Water Board's Sources of Drinking Water Policy.

Meeting participants provided many relevant questions, comments and concerns to Central Valley Water Board staff. In response, staff clarified that the "project area" is defined by the RMKM property boundary and that the beneficial uses of groundwater beneath neighboring properties would still be fully protected by the Central Valley Water Board. Staff assured participants that there is no evidence to indicate that high-salinity groundwater has moved off the RMKM property. Some neighbors of the RMKM property expressed concern that the proposed project might impact the groundwater they use.

Staff was asked to explain whether the proposed project could negatively affect neighboring property values. Staff assured meeting attendees that their property values should not be affected since the Central Valley Water Board would still protect the existing groundwater beneficial uses of neighboring properties. Participants were wary of the Voluntary Water Well Questionnaire and asked what ramifications could befall them if they were to provide water well and groundwater quality and quantity information in response to the Questionnaire. Staff's legal counselor offered to provide a signed memorandum stating that information provided in response to the Questionnaire would be treated as "confidential." Several participants told staff to consider other sources for the information sought through the Questionnaire, including Calaveras County and the California Department of Water Resources.

Staff provided overviews of the regulatory process for de-designating groundwater beneficial uses and of the geological and hydrological conditions in the project area. Several participants expressed support for closure of the RMKM site. Staff reiterated that the public will have additional opportunities to formally comment on the project, starting with the review period for the draft staff report.