
State Water Resources Control Board

May 13, 2022

Mr. Judd Hanna
Hanna Bros. Ranch



APPROVAL OF GROUNDWATER LOCAL COOPERATIVE SOLUTION FOR HANNA BROS. RANCH

Dear Mr. Hanna:

On August 17, 2021, the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) adopted a regulation establishing drought emergency minimum flows in the Scott River and Shasta River watersheds (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 23, §§ 875-875.9) (Regulation). Under the Regulation, local cooperative solutions may be submitted by individuals or groups as alternative means of reducing water use. The Division of Water Rights has reviewed the proposed local cooperative solution and finds that it meets the requirements of Regulation section 875, subdivision (f)(4)(D), with conditions. Additional details regarding the contents of the proposal and conditions are described below.

For overlying or adjudicated groundwater diversions for irrigated agriculture described in Regulation section 875.5, subdivision (f)(4)(D), the Deputy Director for the Division of Water Rights (Deputy Director) may approve a local cooperative solution totaling at least 400 irrigated acres where the proposal is based on a binding agreement, and it reduces water use in the Scott River watershed by 30 percent compared to 2020 or 2021 during the total irrigation season (April 1 – October 31), and specifically includes a 30 percent monthly reduction in water use for July through October. (See section 875.5, subdivision (f)(4)(D) of the Regulation.) Such reductions may be demonstrated by a number of mechanisms, including pumping reports, conservation measures, electric bills, or planting decisions.

The State Water Board received a proposal from Hanna Bros. Ranch (petitioner) for approval of a groundwater local cooperative solution that includes commitments to reduce water use by at least 30 percent as specified under Regulation section 875.5, subdivision (f)(4)(D)(ii). This proposal provides for reduced water use from groundwater wells on approximately 1,179 acres associated with Assessor Parcel Numbers

E. JOAQUIN ESQUIVEL, CHAIR | EILEEN SOBECK, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

014-281-020, 023-071-220, 023-071-230, 023-071-240, 023-071-300, 023-071-430, 023-071-440, 023-300-080, 023-300-190, 023-300-200, 023-300-250, 024-110-290, 024-110-680, 024-170-080, 024-180-150, 024-180-220, 024-180-230, 024-180-240, 024-180-250, 024-180-260, 024-180-270, 024-180-280, 024-180-290, 024-180-300, 024-180-310, 024-180-350, 024-200-070, 024-190-010, and 024-190-030, as determined from documents and information provided by the petitioner as part of the request for approval of a groundwater local cooperative solution. These parcels comprise land that is owned by the petitioner. The proposal indicates that the petitioner has existing water rights from the Scott River and Big Slough and that the petitioner will not make use of these water rights to replace conserved groundwater. The proposal also notes that the lands are served by surface water provided under contract with Scott Valley Irrigation District (SVID), but that such surface water will not be used to substitute for groundwater reductions.

The proposal includes detailed “conservation plan” spreadsheets, maps, information on the efficacy of various equipment upgrades, a narrative description of conservation actions, and a tracking method. The proposed local cooperative solution sets forth verifiable conservation measures to reduce water use on the identified parcels by 36 percent, relative to a 2020 baseline. The proposed conservation actions include: upgrading a pivot to a Low Energy Precision Application (LEPA) system, replacing wheel lines with pivots (LEPA and rotator heads), reducing the sizes of wheel line sprinkler nozzles, shortening wheel line sets (e.g., 10 hour sets instead of 11 hour sets), installation of soil moisture sensors, reducing the size of nozzles for end guns and cannons, forbearance of field edges, reducing the number of cuttings (i.e., some fields will only be cut twice, most likely no fourth cutting), reducing pivot flow rates, and planting grain instead of alfalfa on 50 acres that were planned as alfalfa.

The proposal includes a Binding Agreement (Agreement) with the Siskiyou Resource Conservation District (RCD) granting the Siskiyou RCD with sufficient access to verify compliance with the proposal.

The Division of Water Rights has reviewed the local cooperative solution proposal and finds that it meets the requirements of Regulation section 875, subdivision (f)(4)(D), with the following condition:

- To the extent surface water is available to the petitioner under its existing contract with SVID, surface water used in the 2022 irrigation season shall not exceed the amount of water used during the 2020 irrigation season, nor decrease the estimated 36 percent reduction in groundwater use approved as part of this local cooperative solution.

As determined by the Regulation under section 875, subdivision (f)(4)(D), continued diversions under this local cooperative solution are reasonable and will not result in injury to other legal users of water. Your local cooperative solution proposal, dated March 19, 2022, including the conservation plan, together with the terms of your executed Agreement dated April 6, 2022, are hereby approved, as conditioned. As described in Regulation section 875, subdivision (f)(2), any violations of this approval

are subject to enforcement as a violation of the Regulation. Additionally, violations of other provisions of the Regulation (e.g., prohibition on inefficient livestock watering, surface water curtailment) may result in termination of this approval. Any changes to the approved local cooperative solution or Agreement shall be submitted to the Deputy Director for review and approval prior to implementation.

So long as this approval and the terms of the proposal and the Agreement remain in effect, the curtailments associated with water rights SG003047, SG003051, SG003441, SG003749, SG003752, and SG004547 are suspended as to the above-referenced properties that are owned by Hanna Bros. Ranch and that are part of this proposal. Please note that this approval does not affect the curtailment status of the surface water rights associated with the properties referenced in this proposal, which remain subject to applicable previously issued curtailment orders.

Thank you for your efforts to help support both farming and fisheries in the Scott River watershed during this drought emergency.

If you have questions regarding this letter, please reach out to staff by email at: ScottShastaDrought@waterboards.ca.gov or leave a message on our phone line at: (916) 327-3113.

Sincerely,



for
Erik Ekdahl
Deputy Director
Division of Water Rights

ec: Siskiyou RCD
Email: chris@siskiyougcd.com