



## Stakeholder Feedback Form

### Background/Instructions:

The Paso Robles Area Groundwater Authority (PRAGA) is hosting two public workshops in February 2026 to solicit public feedback on the topics the PRAGA Board will be considering at a Special PRAGA Board meeting on February 18, 2026. The Board would like to hear from you on these important issues. Please provide any feedback on the below topic/options below and return this form via email to [info@PasoRoblesAGA.org](mailto:info@PasoRoblesAGA.org) or via mail to PO Box 82, Paso Robles, CA 93447 by **February 4, 2026**.

### Contact Information

Name/Entity: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

### Topic: Stakeholder Representation

**Goal:** Implement a solution to improve stakeholder representation for PRAGA.

**Issue:** Stakeholders have expressed concern that they do not have adequate representation at PRAGA and their voices are not being heard which was specifically addressed by a stakeholder at the December 1, 2025 special PRAGA Board meeting.

#### Potential Options:

##### Option 1a:

a. **Description:** Establish a formal, Brown Act compliant, Advisory Committee to review items ahead of PRAGA Board meetings and provide direct feedback to the Board. Under this option, Committee members would provide formal recommendations to the Board and report on items at PRAGA meetings.

##### b. Key Considerations:

- Would need to consider Advisory formation issues (e.g. size of committee, how often it would meet, etc.)
- Would provide a venue where issues could be discussed more thoroughly outside of the structure of the PRAGA Board “business meeting” format.
- Establishing a new advisory committee would be an additional cost borne by those paying fees to administer PRAGA.

##### Option 1b:

c. **Description:** Establish an informal stakeholder working group to review items ahead of PRAGA Board meetings on an as-needed basis to provide feedback to the Board on specific items. Under

this option, the stakeholder working group would submit feedback to staff that would be presented to the Board.

**d. Key Considerations:**

- This option would establish a mechanism that would be more flexible than establishing a formal Advisory Committee, but would be a lower cost to administer.
- Need to determine appointment process when a stakeholder working group is convened.

**Option 2:**

**a. Description:** Increase the number of PRAGA Board seats (currently four) by providing each Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) with one additional seat (two per GSA, total of eight) where each GSA could appoint a new Director to increase Board diversity.

**b. Key Considerations:**

- Adding additional Board seats would require a change to the joint powers agreement (JPA) which could be costly and take several months to finalize.
- Each GSA would determine who is appointed to their additional seat.

**Option 3:**

**a. Description:** Increase the number of PRAGA Board seats by three (currently four, would result in seven seats) to provide representation for specific stakeholder categories (i.e. large/small pumpers, grazers, de minimis users, etc.).

**b. Key Considerations:**

- Adding additional Board seats would require a change to the joint powers agreement (JPA) which could be costly and take several months to finalize.
- Need to determine the stakeholder category reserved for each seat.
- Need to determine voting percentages.
- Need to determine the application/appointment process.
- Need to determine if minimum requirements for applicants apply.

**Which option best do you believe would best improve stakeholder representation? Please provide any feedback or comments regarding the options above.**

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**Topic: Fiscal Year 2026-2027 Budget and Funding Mechanism**

**Goal:** Develop a Fiscal Year (FY) 2026-2027 budget to administer PRAGA, and implement a funding mechanism to support those activities.

**Issue:** Paso was designated as a critically overdraft basin by the State and has to become sustainable by 2040 (along with 93 other basins throughout the State). To achieve sustainability, the PRAGA was formed to implement Paso Basin's Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) and comply with the requirements of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA). To perform this work, PRAGA proposed a Prop 218 funding structure which was determined not successful on August 1, 2025. Following the failed Prop 218, stakeholders and the PRAGA Board have been discussing revisions to the budget and discussing funding options. Per the PRAGA joint powers agreement (JPA), a funding mechanism must be established by June 30, 2026, to avoid termination of the JPA, resulting in State intervention.

## **FY 2026-2027 Budget**

A [draft Fiscal Year 2026-2027 Budget](#) is included for stakeholder feedback. While the previous proposed budget exceeded \$3 million annually (including costs for future projects), the below draft budget represents a minimum required SGMA compliance budget totaling approximately \$1.2 million. The PRAGA Board will be reviewing this draft budget on February 18, 2026 and is seeking feedback on the budget components. When commenting on specific budget components, please include the budget reference number.

**The PRAGA Board will be reviewing this draft budget on February 18, 2026 and is requesting feedback on the proposed budget components.** When providing feedback on specific budget components, please include the associated budget reference number.

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# DRAFT Fiscal Year 2026-2027 Budget

Wednesday, February 18, 2026

| Budget Components   | FY 25-26 Budget<br>Approved on 12-1-25          | DRAFT<br>FY 26-27 |   |
|---|---|-------------------|---|
| <b>Program Administration</b>   |   |                   |   |
| <b>SGMA-Required</b>  |   |                   | <b>Budget Notes</b>   |
| 1 Annual Report   | \$102,000                                       | \$100,000         | Required by DWR. Cost based on recent proposals.  |
| 2 GSP Fifth Year Evaluation   | \$0   | \$10,000          | 2025 eval already submitted to State, next eval not due until 2030. Money to interact with DWR on any questions, clarifications, meetings on eval, if received. |
| 3 GSP Amendment   | \$0   |                   | No current plan to amend the GSP.   |
| 4 Groundwater Model Use/Update  | \$0   |                   | Contemplated to be funded by grant funding.   |
| 5 Basin Monitoring Operations & Maintenance, DWR Upload                 | \$0   | \$140,860         | Total = 113 wells. 49 transducers. Data upload and groundwater conditions reports.  |
| 6 Establish SMCs & MT Exceedance Investigation                          |   | \$20,000          | RFP for on-call tech support services to perform tech analysis and recommended options for well exceedances.  |
| 7 Data Management System (DMS)  | \$0   | \$0               | Recommend deferring until FY 27-28 (fallowland platform may address this need).   |
| 8 ET Ag Water Usage Program (LandIQ)                                    | \$100,000                                       | \$100,000         | Monthly evapotranspiration data for the basin.  |
|   | <b>SGMA-Required Subtotal</b>                   | <b>\$202,000</b>  | <b>\$370,860</b>  |
| <b>Administrative</b>   |   |                   |   |
| 9 Executive Director & Support Staff                                    | \$253,446                                       | \$216,000         | Assume monthly meetings (does not include Advisory Committee costs).  |
| 10 Legal Counsel  | \$215,471                                       | \$144,000         | Assume monthly meetings (does not include Advisory Committee costs).  |
| 11 Insurance  | \$21,084  | \$22,000          | Develop audit policy and engage Auditor for FY 25-26 + 2 months (14 months total); RFP, etc.  |
| 12 Grant Development  | \$0   | \$60,000          | Costs to develop and submit 2 grant applications (potential Prop 4 grant opportunity).  |
| 13 Technical Consultant(s)  |   |                   |   |
| 14 SCI Prop 218 Development (did not pass on Aug 1st)                   | \$34,151  | \$0               | SCI work to support Prop 218 (did not pass).  |
| 15 Land IQ Prop 218 Support & On-Call Svrcs (did not pass on Aug 1st)   | \$35,000  |                   | Contract approved on 8-18-25 for \$35k. \$21,350 for Prop 218 (did not pass) ET support, and \$13,650 for on-call services (if needed).                         |
| 16 Funding Mechanism Development/Implementation for FY 26-27 (Fee Consu | \$50,000  | \$50,000          | Costs to develop and implement a Funding Mechanism for FY 26-27.  |
| 17 Land IQ ET Data Revision for Fee                                     |   | \$15,000          |   |
| 18 Administration of Fee (Prop 26 or 218)                               |   | \$30,000          | Costs to implement either a Prop 26 or 218. Will be lower cost if a Prop 26.  |
| 19 Public Education and Outreach Program                                | \$46,000  | \$35,000          | Assumes PR firm is selected to perform outreach activities for PRAGA.   |
| 20 Website Management   | \$6,000   | \$6,000           | Monthly website cost = \$500 through Streamline, billed annually in May   |
| 21 GW Fee Billing & Collection  | \$0   | \$40,000          | Direct bill landowners if Prop 26/218 implemented in FY 25-26. Develop RFP or HG to administer. Estimate based on 1,200 landowners.                             |
|   | <b>Administrative Subtotal</b>                  | <b>\$661,152</b>  | <b>\$618,000</b>  |
|   | <b>Program Administration Subtotal</b>          | <b>\$863,152</b>  | <b>\$988,860</b>  |
| <b>Projects and Management Actions</b>                                  |   |                   |   |
| <b>Regulatory Programs</b>  |   |                   |   |
| 22 Domestic Well Impact Mitigation Program                              | \$0   | \$50,000          | Costs for potential program development.  |
| 23 Address Additional GSP Data Gaps                                     | \$0   | \$0               | Address DWR periodic eval feedback if received in FY 26-27.   |
| 24 Well Verification & Registration Program                             | \$0   | \$7,000           | Grant/County developing program; still in development. Costs to coordinate with County agencies on well verification/registration program and maintain records. |
| <b>Demand Management Programs</b>                                       |   |                   |   |
| 25 Demand Reduction and Water Supply Programs                           | \$0   | \$0               | No projects currently identified.   |
| 26 Fallowland Land Registry Program (Formerly labeled MILR)             | \$0   | \$0               | Fallow land registry platform development covered by grant; Platform administration covered by county.  |
|   | <b>Projects and Management Actions Subtotal</b> | <b>\$0</b>        | <b>\$57,000</b>   |
|   | <b>Subtotal</b>                                 | <b>\$863,152</b>  | <b>\$1,045,860</b>  |
| 25 Contingency (i.e. Prudent Reserve)                                   | \$81,800  | \$104,586         | Board directed to use 10% on 8-18-25. Renamed from "Prudent Reserve" to "Contingency".  |
|   | <b>Total</b>                                    | <b>\$944,952</b>  | <b>\$1,150,446</b>  |

## Funding Mechanism Options

A funding mechanism needs to be established to collect money to allow PRAGA to implement the GSP and the two primary options to funding Groundwater Sustainability Agencies as described in the California Water Codes sections 10730 are listed below.

### **Option 1: Prop 26 (Water Code 10730)**

- a. Description:** This option would set a fee by dividing the approved FY 2026-2027 budget amount by the August 2024 through July 2025 groundwater use calculation (determined by Land IQ's satellite-based evapotranspiration methodology) and charging groundwater extractors based on their consumed groundwater use for the 12-month period. A report describing the basis of the charge would be posted online, noticed to parcel owners, and following a PRAGA public rate hearing, the Board could adopt a charge via resolution.
- b. Key Considerations:**
  - A review process would be set for the ET data for each parcel on which landowners would be charged to allow landowners to make any corrections to the data.
  - Need to determine if de minimis users (those using less than 2 AF) should be exempt from charge.
  - Need to determine penalty fees.
  - Need to determine the method of charging pumpers (direct bill vs. tax roll).
  - This option is simpler and cheaper to administer but does not require a landowner protest.
  - This charge setting process would need to occur on an annual basis and would be directly connected with the current Fiscal Year budget.

### **Option 2: Prop 218 (Water Code 10730.2) with threshold (only impose fees on water users using over a specific AF amount annually).**

- a. Description:** This option would charge groundwater extractors using more a specified AF amount annually. This option would set a charge by establishing a 5-year budget projection and establishing different rates for different user classifications as described in a cost of service study. A notice of the proposed groundwater charge would be distributed to affected landowners who would have the opportunity to protest the proposed charge. For this charge to pass, less than a majority protest must be achieved which would be determined at a public hearing. If the charge is successful, the charge would be assessed to parcel owners according to their water consumed water use for the August 2024 through July 2025 period. For agricultural users, this would be determined by Land IQ's satellite-based evapotranspiration methodology.
- b. Key Considerations:**

- A review process would be set for the ET data for each parcel on which landowners would be charged to allow landowners to make any corrections to the data.
- Need to determine if de minimis users (those using less than 2 AF) should be exempt from charge.
- Need to determine penalty fees.
- Need to determine the method of charging pumpers (direct bill vs. tax roll).

- This option is more complex and expensive to administer and does provide for a landowner protest.
- The cost of service study would set the maximum charge that could be assessed in a given year (within the 5-year window), but the PRAGA Board would need to pass a charge each year, which could be less than the maximum amount, on an annual basis.

**Which funding mechanism approach do you believe is most appropriate for funding PRAGA GSP implementation?** Please provide any feedback or comments regarding the funding mechanism options above.

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