



For Immediate Release
August 7, 2020

Contact: Schaelene Rollins for MIUGSA
916.397.1915 * Schaelene@pandopublicrelations.com

MERCED IRRIGATION URBAN GROUNDWATER SUSTAINABILITY AGENCY ADOPTS FEE

New regulatory fee will provide funding necessary to fulfill its role as a groundwater management agency.

Merced, Calif – August 7, 2020 – Following a public hearing on July 28, 2020, the Merced Irrigation-Urban Groundwater Sustainability Agency (MIUGSA/Agency) unanimously voted in favor of adopting a regulatory fee to fund the typical annual operational costs of MIUGSA’s regulatory activities, as part of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act of 2014.

“The funding allows MIUGSA to continue to comply with the State Sustainable Groundwater Management Act and its related operational and support activities in its respective portion of the basin in accordance with the Merced Subbasin Groundwater Sustainability Plan.”

Hicham ElTaj, MIUGSA’s Chair.

In 2014, the state legislature established law requiring communities with overdrafted groundwater basins to become sustainable by 2040. The intent was to discontinue pumping more water from local aquifers than could be replenished. Under the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act, all groundwater pumpers in a basin are expected to cooperate to address local water challenges. Under the state law, if a community fails to address its challenges – or meet the set deadlines – the State of California is required to manage a community’s local groundwater.

In response, the MIUGSA was formed. It is tasked with addressing groundwater regulatory activities in eastern Merced County. It is comprised of the cities of Atwater, Livingston and Merced; Le Grand and Planada Community Services Districts; Merced Irrigation District; and Winton Water and Sanitary District.

The Fee Study, developed by Hansford Economic Consulting LLC, explored several methodologies that took into account the diverse ways in which groundwater is extracted and used within the MIUGSA boundaries. The effort included a significant outreach component, soliciting input from stakeholders, including residential, commercial, and agricultural, to inform the development of the fee.

MIUGSA’s estimated annual budget for fiscal year 2020/2021 is \$800,000.00. The adopted regulatory fee is calculated based on acreage and land use. Most residential customers on a standard lot will pay less than \$2 per year. Those with larger lots will pay more based on acreage. Agriculture will pay \$5.52 per acre per year. For most property owners, the fee will be collected annually by the Merced County Auditor-Controller with the property tax bills. All property owners within the MIUGSA’s boundaries are beneficiaries of the MIUGSA’s regulatory activities, and therefore are subject to the fee. The revenue will cover expenses related to monitoring, reporting, enforcing, materials/equipment, and other related operational costs.

“In order to protect our water needs in the Merced Irrigation-Urban agency, there will be expenses,” said Jean Okuye, President of the Valley Land Alliance. “Nothing comes without a price.”

For more information about the Merced Irrigation Urban Groundwater Sustainability Agency and the fee study process, please visit <http://www.miugsa.org/index.cfm/feestudy/>