

**STATE OF CALIFORNIA  
REGIONAL WATER QUALITY CONTROL BOARD  
SAN FRANCISCO BAY REGION**

**MEETING DATE: March 12, 2025**

**ITEM: 4**

**Executive Officer's Report**

## Executive Officer's Report March 7, 2025

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## Barlas Feed, Petaluma – Underground Storage Tank Site Case Closure (Joannie Wang)

Last month, we approved the closure of the Barlas Feed underground storage tank cleanup site at 430 Bailey Avenue in Petaluma (Source Property) shown in Figure 1 below. The Source Property, which currently operates as an agricultural business, previously operated with a 10,000-gallon diesel underground storage tank.



Figure 1: Location map showing Barlas Feed Underground Storage Tank Cleanup Site.

The Sonoma County Local Oversight Program and the Regional Water Board have overseen this case since the underground storage tank was removed in 1996. Following removal of the underground storage tank, contaminated soil and groundwater were identified beneath the underground storage tank location. Contaminated soil was subsequently excavated. However, some residual groundwater contamination remained in the shallow groundwater at the Source Property until it was further remediated in 2022.

### Protection of Nearby Domestic Supply Wells

Petaluma Valley groundwater is relied on for domestic water supply. Notably, there are several domestic drinking water supply wells within 600 feet of the underground storage tank leak location. The commercial Source Property has a domestic drinking water supply well and three adjacent residential properties also have domestic wells (Figure 2 below). As part of the underground storage tank investigation, the domestic supply wells were sampled several times, and no contamination has ever been detected in them.

Nonetheless, to ensure that the domestic wells would not be affected in the future, in-situ oxidation groundwater remediation was conducted in and around the former underground storage tank location from 2020 to 2022.

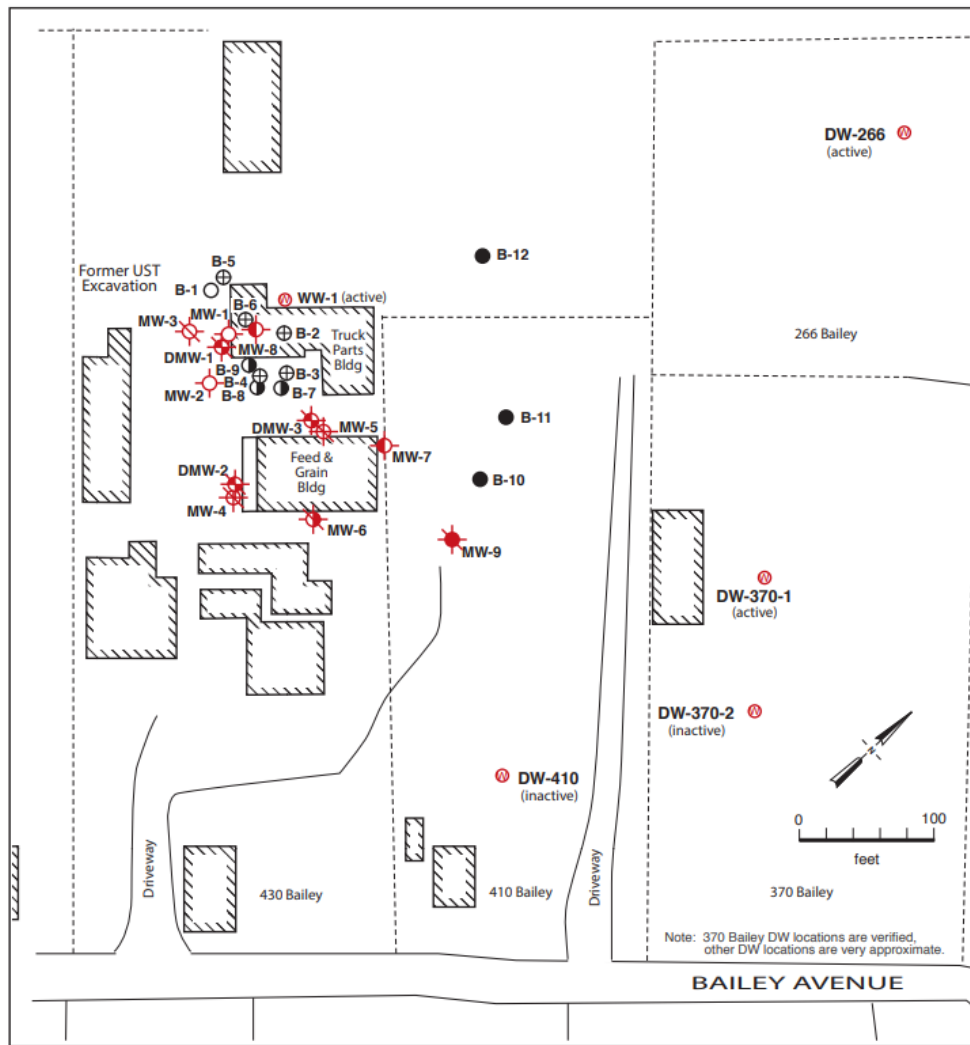



Figure 2: Site map showing supply wells on and around the Source Property

 Domestic Water Well Location

### Evaluation of Case Closure

In 2024, after the in-situ oxidation remediation had run its course, we evaluated the case against the criteria in the State Water Board's Low-Threat Underground Storage Tank Case Closure Policy. Considering the low levels of residual contamination in shallow groundwater, that the residual contamination is expected to further degrade over time, and that the onsite and nearby domestic wells are much deeper and unaffected by the contamination, we concluded that the case was low-threat and could be closed. In October 2024, we sent a *Notice of Intent to Issue a No Further Action Letter* to the owners of the source and adjacent properties, initiating a 60-day public comment period on the proposed case closure.

### Public Concerns

In response to our Notice of Intent, an owner of one of the adjacent properties voiced concerns about the underground storage tank contamination potentially affecting their domestic supply well, which is located 420 feet downgradient of the former underground storage tank. In a series of communications, Regional Water Board staff engaged with

the resident to explain that the contamination was unlikely to reach their well due to several lines of evidence, which included:

- No contaminants of concern were detected in their domestic well in all three sampling events that occurred from 1999 to 2017.
- The closest groundwater monitoring well for the underground storage tank site is 220 feet upgradient of their domestic well and has historically had no detections of contaminants.
- A hydrogeologic study conducted in September of 2023 confirmed that contamination was confined to the shallow water bearing zone (5 to 50 feet below ground surface), while the domestic supply wells are screened in a deeper water bearing zone from 150 to 250 feet below ground surface. The study also showed that these water bearing zones have minimal hydraulic communication with each other.

### **Conclusion**

With these findings clearly presented, the neighbor's concerns were addressed, and we confirmed that case closure was still warranted. In January of 2025, we requested destruction of all monitoring wells at the site to eliminate any potential conduits for subsurface contamination migration. After nearly three decades of investigation, monitoring, and remediation, the underground storage tank cleanup at Barlas Feed will be closed, ensuring protection of local water resources while allowing the property to move forward without further regulatory oversight.

**Groundwater Awareness Week and Sustainable Groundwater Management Team  
(David Tanouye and Jeff Melby)**

Groundwater Awareness Week (March 9-15) is a nationwide initiative observed annually and led by the National Ground Water Association ([NGWA](#)) to highlight the importance of sustaining groundwater resources to support our communities, industries, and ecosystems. This week serves as a call to action for conservation, sustainable management, and pollution prevention. In California, where groundwater supplies comprise nearly 40% of the state's water in an average year – and up to 60% during droughts – awareness and responsible stewardship are more critical than ever.

The San Francisco Bay Regional Water Board is involved with overseeing groundwater management across the nine Bay Area counties. While much of the region relies on surface water from reservoirs and imported sources, groundwater remains an essential water supply in many areas. In fact, groundwater makes up about 20% of the Bay Area's total water supply, with heaviest use in the Santa Clara, Napa-Sonoma, Livermore, and Petaluma Valleys.

However, groundwater resources face several challenges, including:

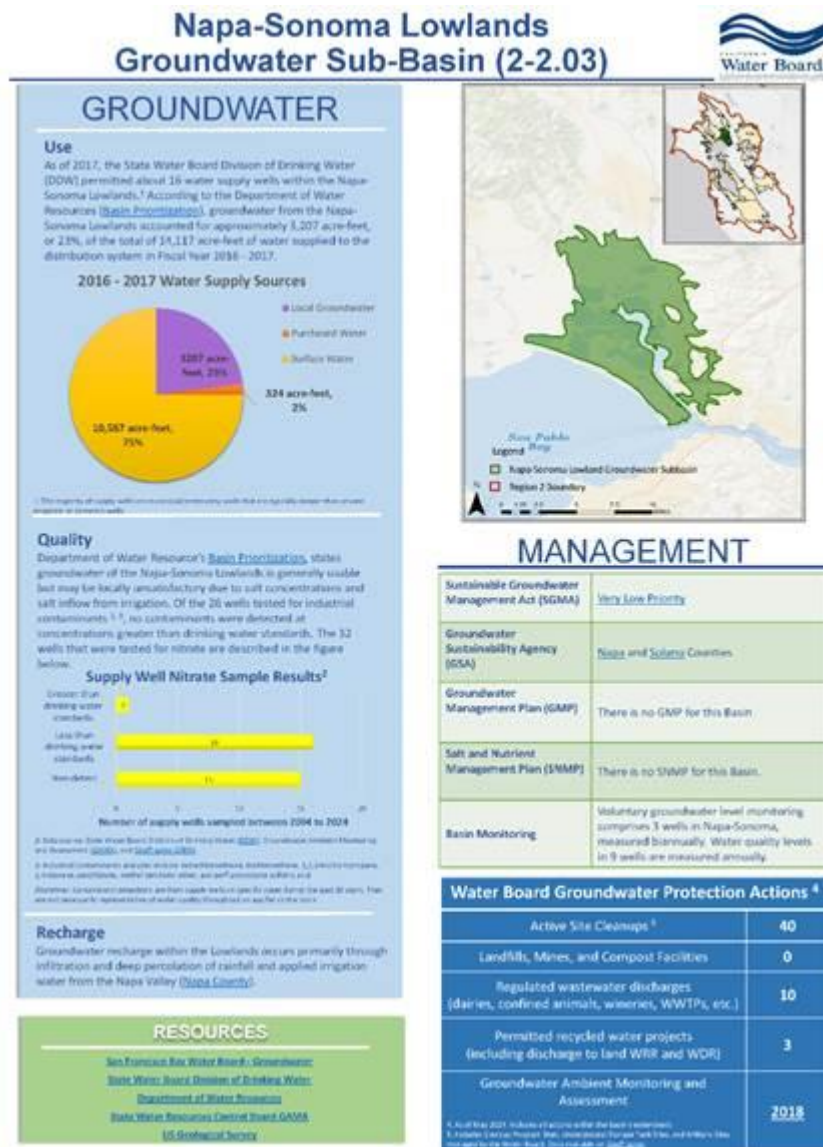
- Saltwater intrusion, threatening freshwater supplies near shoreline areas
- Contamination from past industrial activities, such as solvents and heavy metals
- Over-extraction, leading to depletion of aquifers
- Pollution from urban runoff, agriculture, and leaking underground storage tanks

Despite these risks, groundwater in the region is generally of high quality. To maintain its sustainability, aquifer recharge plays an important role in regional groundwater management. Local agencies utilize percolation ponds, spreading basins, in-stream recharge, and injection wells to replenish depleted aquifers. Recent efforts we are helping facilitate include the Aquifer Storage and Recovery Pilot Testing in the Sonoma and Petaluma Valleys.

The Regional Water Board leads multiple initiatives to protect and restore groundwater quality, including:

- Regulatory oversight of contaminated site cleanups (e.g., industrial chemicals, petroleum hydrocarbons, heavy metals)
- A cross-divisional team of staff involved with Sustainable Groundwater Management Act ([SGMA](#)) efforts to promote long-term sustainability
- Collaboration with local agencies on aquifer recharge, supply well protection, and preservation of groundwater dependent ecosystems

As part of our ongoing projects, the Sustainable Groundwater Management team has developed fact sheets – known as “quick looks.” The Basin Quick Looks summarize existing information sources and provide insights into groundwater use, quality, and local management efforts for many of the groundwater basins in the region. These resources are available on the [Groundwater webpage](#) under the "Groundwater Basins" tab, where users can access a map with links to basin details.



Groundwater Awareness Week is an annual reminder that this vital resource is an ongoing priority for maintaining a sustainable water supply for our communities, economy, and environment. Whether through conservation, pollution prevention, or sustainable management practices, every effort counts in protecting our groundwater for future generations.

### **State Water Board Recognition (Eileen M. White)**

Each year the State recognizes significant contributions made by staff at the Water Board. The Superior Accomplishment Award and the Sustained Superior Accomplishment Award are based on nominations submitted by our leadership team to the State recognizing employees whose performance results in exceptional contribution(s) to state government. These awards demonstrate the quality and commitment from some of our many talented team members and I am honored to share with you the 2024 recipients from our region.

The first Sustained Superior Accomplishment Award for 2024 goes to one of our staff who operates consistently and diligently behind the scenes. Victor Aelion, Associate Government Program Analyst, served as board clerk during the pandemic in addition to his work in the Watershed Division. Victor manages our incoming 401 certifications and grants while also supporting our operations with fleet maintenance, repairs in the office, and general office needs including IT support for moves and trouble shooting. Individuals like Victor Aelion allow us to accomplish all we do out in the field, in the office, and in support of our mission.

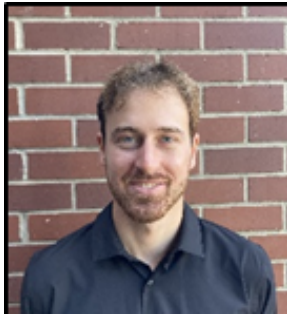
Next, Wesley "Wes" Wong, Information Technology Specialist, was nominated and received a Sustained Superior Accomplishment Award for years of exceptional service. Wes was nominated by the San Francisco Bay Regional leadership team for his never-ending support and dedication to helping us achieve our mission. Wes is an incredible asset for our staff, our management and our board members. His work ethic, his can-do attitude and his appreciation of our varied customer base make him an outstanding member of our team and we could not accomplish all we do without his dedication, skill set and commitment to our success. Wes was instrumental in our transitions from in-person work and board meetings to fully remote work and finally to the hybrid environment we now have. These transitions for most of us were fairly smooth thanks in large part to the work Wes took on behind the scenes including overseeing the re-cabling work required in the Elihu Harris building auditorium so that we could hold hybrid meetings effectively. Wes has been the lead IT support in our region covering several offices and consistently anticipating all of our IT needs.

Finally, Kimberlee West, Water Resource Control Engineer in the Toxics Cleanup Division, was nominated and selected at the State level to receive a Superior Accomplishment Award for her passionate work on PFAS toxicity and occurrence in the environment. At the May 8, 2024 board meeting, Kimberlee presented to the board details on PFAS exposure, investigation work and technical reporting requirements. She shared with us the collaboration done with the Livermore Valley groundwater agency leading to their receipt of \$40 million to help fund a treatment plant providing safe drinking water to Valley residents. She developed a fact sheet which lives on our website, and she often represents our agency and shares her PFAS expertise at technical meetings throughout the State. Kimberlee does this work while also managing 25 cleanup sites for the San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board.

We are lucky to have such a committed and talented team in our region.



**Staff Updates (Eileen M. White)**



Jackson Fimrite was promoted to an Environmental Scientist in the Northeast Bay section of the Watershed Management Division. Jackson joined the Water Board as a Scientific Aid in September 2024. He comes from a background of working in fisheries, and he has a bachelor's degree in environmental studies and biology from UC Santa Cruz. He is looking forward to this opportunity to gain new experience reviewing 401 water quality certification applications and playing a part in protecting the San Francisco Bay. In his free time, he enjoys playing soccer, reading, and making music with friends.



Ashraf Ali joins the Southeast Bay section of the Watershed Management Division as a Water Resource Control Engineer. He will be working on our municipal stormwater programs and supporting stormwater capture and use activities in the region. Ashraf has a bachelor's degree in civil engineering from Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology, and a master's and PhD in civil and environmental engineering from Carnegie Mellon University. Prior to joining the Water Board, he primarily worked in Bangladesh. He has both academic and professional experience in stormwater management, water quality, and water treatment. In his free time, he enjoys watching movies and following cricket and soccer.



Kelsey Kruger joins the Northeast Bay section of the Watershed Management Division as an Environmental Scientist. She will be working on 401 water quality certifications. Kelsey holds a Master of Science in Agroecology from the University of Wisconsin Madison and a Bachelor of Science in Sustainable Agriculture from University of California Davis. Prior to joining the Water Board, she was a Research Specialist at the University of Wisconsin and investigated the effects of fire on soil ecosystems and phosphorous loss from agricultural fields run off and its effect on local waterways. Outside of work, she enjoys birding, cycling, and cooking.



We'd like to welcome and congratulate David Tanouye as the new leader of the North Bay Section in the Toxics Cleanup Division!! David joined the Water Board in 2016 as a scientific aid in the Underground Storage Tank program. In 2017 he was hired as an engineering geologist in the Groundwater Protection Division where he worked on a variety of complex cleanup projects in the Site Cleanup and Department of Defense and Energy programs. In 2019, David was selected to lead our Sustainable Groundwater Management team. In that capacity, he worked on several cross-program projects involving groundwater-

surface water dynamics, aquifer storage and recovery, and salt and nitrate groundwater evaluations. David has also served in other leadership roles including on our In-House Training Committee and as a Board and leadership team member with the labor union, *Professional Engineers in California Government*, which represents our staff engineers and geologists. In his new role, David supervises staff in our North Bay section and manages our leaky underground storage tank program.

**Enforcement Actions (Brian Thompson and James Parrish)**

The following table shows proposed settlements since January’s report. As the proposed settlements are pending and could come before the Board, ex-parte communications are not allowed. Please refer to the [Pending Enforcement Liabilities and Penalties](#) webpage for more information on the details of the alleged violation and proposed settlement.

***Proposed Settlements***

The following are noticed for 30-day public comment periods. If no significant comments are received by the deadline, the Executive Officer will sign the orders implementing these settlements.

<b>Discharger</b>	<b>Violation(s)</b>	<b>Proposed Penalty</b>	<b>Comment Deadline</b>
Advanced Micro Devices, Inc.	Discharge limit violations	\$6,000	March 3, 2025
IQHQ-Spur Ph I, LLC	Discharge limit violations	\$6,000	March 5, 2025
Millbrae Adrian Science Park LLC	Discharge limit violations	\$12,000	March 12, 2025
Santa Clara University	Discharge limit violations	\$12,000	March 17, 2025
Crockett Cogeneration LLP	Discharge limit violations	\$3,000	March 24, 2025
Tesoro Refining & Marketing Company LLC	Discharge limit violations	\$15,000	March 24, 2025
IQHQ ELCO Yards, LP	Discharge limit violation	\$3,000	March 24, 2025
Samuel Merritt University	Discharge limit violations	\$6,000	March 24, 2025
City of Benicia	Discharge limit violations	\$3,000	March 27, 2025
Lockheed Martin Corporation	Discharge limit violations	\$6,000 <sup>1</sup>	March 27, 2025
Cedar Fair Entertainment Company	Discharge limit violations	\$21,000	March 27, 2025
City and County of San Francisco (Oceanside Water Pollution Control Plant)	Discharge limit violations	\$6,000 <sup>1</sup>	March 27, 2025
City and County of San Francisco (Southeast Water Pollution Control Plant)	Discharge limit violations	\$3,000 <sup>1</sup>	March 27, 2025

1 The penalty would supplement Regional Monitoring Program studies. The Regional Monitoring Program is managed by the San Francisco Estuary Institute to collect water quality information in support of management decisions to restore and protect beneficial uses of the Region’s waters.

**401 Water Quality Certification Applications Received (Elizabeth Morrison)**

The table below lists those applications received for Clean Water Act section 401 water quality certification from January 16 through February 12, 2024. A check mark in the right-hand column indicates a project with work that may be in the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC) jurisdiction.

<b>Project Name</b>	<b>City/Location</b>	<b>County</b>	<b>May have BCDC Jurisdiction</b>
Vallejo Ferry Dredging Project	Vallejo	Solano	X
Aramis Solar Energy Generation and Storage Project	Livermore	Alameda	
Mallard Cove Gangway Replacement	Greenbrae	Marin	X
Lake Temescal Oxygen Saturation Technology System Project	Oakland	Alameda	
Zinfandel Bridge Emergency Repair Project	Unincorporated	Napa	
Sunnyvale East and West Channels Flood Protection Project	Sunnyvale	Santa Clara	X
Tall Grass Drive Bridge Winterization	Napa	Napa	
Hampton Road Large Trash Capture Project at Western Blvd	Hayward	Alameda	
Larkspur Marina Bulkhead Replacement Project	Larkspur	Marin	X
Creek Bank Scour Protection Martinez Early Childhood Center Project	Martinez	Contra Costa	
Alameda Creek West End North Levee Turnaround	Fremont	Alameda	
Alamo Creek Bank Stabilization and Flood Management Pilot Project	Dublin	Alameda	
Brookpark Storm Drain Outfall Replacement Project City of Oakland Project No. 1006502	Oakland	Alameda	
Sunnyvale WPCP Secondary Effluent Pipeline Replacement Project	Sunnyvale	Santa Clara	X

<b>Project Name</b>	<b>City/Location</b>	<b>County</b>	<b>May have BCDC Jurisdiction</b>
San Leandro Channel Pipeline Crossing Project	Alameda	Alameda	X