

**MEMORANDUM
LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSION**

TO: Local Agency Formation Commission

FROM: Stephen Lucas, Executive Officer

SUBJECT: **File No. 20-05 - Agricultural Groundwater Users of Butte County (AGUBC) – Proposed Tuscan Water District Formation**

DATE: February 26, 2020 for the meeting of March 5, 2020

Background

For several years, a group of landowners/farmers who rely exclusively on groundwater to irrigate their agricultural operations, have been actively working towards forming a California Water District in the northwest corner of Butte County, roughly overlapping the Vina Groundwater Basin. The purpose of this effort was to 1) ensure their voices were heard as non-district represented landowners in the sustainable groundwater management discussions at that time and 2) ultimately, ensure a reliable source of groundwater for future agricultural activities.

These farmers began their efforts working closely with the Butte County Farm Bureau in 2016 and the County of Butte shortly thereafter as the Board of Supervisors (BOS) sanctioned Groundwater Pumpers Advisory Committee (GPAC). The GPAC was intended to advise the BOS as the County implemented the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA). Some of this group eventually evolved into the **Agricultural Groundwater Users of Butte County (AGUBC)**, a California 501(c)(6) non-profit corporation with its membership representing over 50,000 irrigated acres in Butte County.

The AGUBC determined that its best option to safeguard their agricultural operations related to water availability within the Vina Basin, is to form the proposed Tuscan Water District (TWD) as shown on the attached map (Attachment 1). Given their active involvement with the BOS and the Butte County Water and Resource Conservation Department, the AGUBC initially sought to form the new district by a resolution of application from the BOS to LAFCo. This direction was curtailed by the County and subsequently, the AGUBC landowners decided to petition LAFCo directly as is provided for in the Cortese Knox Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000 (GC Section 56700, 56700.4).

The first official step was for the proponents to provide LAFCo with a *Notice of Intent to Circulate Petition* which was submitted on December 18, 2019 and subsequently circulated by the Executive Officer to affected local agencies (Government Code Section 56700.4). With the submittal of the Notice of Intent to Circulate Petition, the proponents began circulating a petition to affected landowners seeking support for the proposed district formation.

New Developments

The proponents for the district formation have tentatively collected sufficient landowner signatures and are expected to submit the petition(s) collected to the Executive Officer in short order. Once the petition is submitted the Executive Officer has 30 days (excluding weekends) from the date of

petition submittal to cause the landowner petition to be validated by the County Assessor. For the Petition to be valid, the proponents will need to submit signatures from the holders of title to a **majority in area of land** which is capable of using water beneficially for irrigation, domestic, industrial or municipal purposes and which can be serviced from common sources of supply and by the same system of works (Water Code Section 34153).

Should the petition be deemed sufficient, the proponents are then permitted to make an application with the Butte LAFCo for the proposed District formation.

ACTION REQUESTED: None. Informational Item Only

Attachments: 1. Proposed Tuscan Water District Map

