

Intra-Basin Administrative Agreement
For Implementation of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act
In the Santa Ynez River Valley Groundwater Basin

This Intra-Basin Administrative Agreement (“Agreement”) is made and effective as of _____, 2019 (“Effective Date”) by and between the Parties executing this Agreement below, each referred to herein as a “Party” and collectively as the “Parties.”

A. **WHEREAS**, in 2014 the State of California enacted the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act, including but not limited to Water Code section 10720 et seq., referred to in this Agreement as the “Act” or “SGMA,” as subsequently amended, pursuant to which certain agencies may become or participate in “Groundwater Sustainability Agencies” (“GSAs”) and prepare, adopt, and implement “Groundwater Sustainability Plans” (“GSPs”) to achieve sustainable groundwater management in basins throughout the State. The Act defines a groundwater “basin” as a basin or sub-basin identified and defined in California Department of Water Resources (“DWR”) Bulletin 118 or as modified pursuant to the Act. Each Party is a local agency located within the Santa Ynez River Valley Groundwater Basin (Bulletin 118, Basin No. 3-15, “Basin”), each is qualified to become a GSA or participate in a GSA or multiple GSAs, and each is authorized to adopt a GSP or participate in the adoption of a GSP or multiple GSPs under the Act for all or a portion of the Basin, as applicable; and

B. **WHEREAS**, the Parties previously executed a “Memorandum of Understanding for Implementation of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act in the Santa Ynez River Valley Groundwater Basin” dated May 23, 2016 (“2016 MOU”) to, among other things, provide for the initial organization of the Basin according to three separate Management Areas, ensure the timely formation and filing of a separate GSA for each of the three Management Areas, and establish the basis for a cooperative and ongoing working relationship between and among the Parties and GSAs for implementing the goals and requirements of SGMA throughout the Basin; and

C. **WHEREAS**, in accordance with SGMA and the 2016 MOU, three separate GSAs have been formed and are operating within the Basin, wherein one GSA represents the Western Management Area, one GSA represents the Central Management Area, and one GSA represents the Eastern Management Area; and

D. **WHEREAS**, the Western Management Area Groundwater Sustainability Agency (“WMA GSA”) was formed by the City of Lompoc, the Vandenberg Village Community Services District, the Mission Hills Community Services District, the Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District, and the Santa Barbara County Water Agency pursuant to the January 11, 2017 Memorandum of Agreement for Formation of a Groundwater Sustainability Agency for the Western Management Area in the Santa Ynez River Valley Groundwater Basin Under the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (“WMA MOA”); and

E. **WHEREAS**, the Central Management Area Groundwater Sustainability Agency (“CMA GSA”) was formed by the City of Buellton, the Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District, and the Santa Barbara County Water Agency pursuant to the January 11, 2017 Memorandum of Agreement for Formation of a Groundwater Sustainability Agency for the Central Management Area in the Santa Ynez River Valley Groundwater Basin Under the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (“CMA MOA”); and

F. **WHEREAS**, the Eastern Management Area Groundwater Sustainability Agency (“EMA GSA”) was formed by the City of Solvang, the Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District, Improvement District No.1, the Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District, and the Santa Barbara County Water Agency pursuant to the April 27, 2017 Memorandum of Agreement for Formation of a Groundwater Sustainability Agency for the Eastern Management Area in the Santa Ynez River Valley Groundwater Basin Under the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (“EMA MOA”); and

G. **WHEREAS**, the Parties hereto wish to supplement and provide a further framework for cooperative and ongoing efforts among themselves and among the WMA GSA, the CMA GSA, and the EMA GSA for implementation of SGMA throughout the Basin in a manner that is effective, efficient, fair, and at reasonable costs.

THEREFORE, in consideration of the Recitals set forth above and the mutual promises set forth below, the Parties agree as follows:

1. Purpose. The primary purpose of this Agreement is to facilitate a cooperative and ongoing working relationship between the Parties and among the WMA GSA, the CMA GSA, and the EMA GSA that will allow them to explore, study, evaluate, develop, and carry out mutually beneficial approaches and strategies for implementing SGMA throughout the Basin in an effective, efficient, fair, and cost-effective manner.
2. Development of Separate Groundwater Sustainability Plans.
 - (a) In accordance with the WMA MOA, the CMA MOA, and the EMA MOA, a separate GSP will be developed by the respective GSAs for each of the three Management Areas identified in the Recitals above. As a part of their cooperative and ongoing efforts under this Agreement, the Parties through their respective GSAs shall continue to discuss and explore the potential formation of one or more new joint powers authority or alternative arrangement(s) to implement the GSPs and carry out the objectives and requirements of SGMA throughout the Basin in a coordinated fashion.
 - (b) As further described at Section 3 below, the Parties acknowledge and agree that the respective GSPs must be developed in a coordinated fashion and that a Coordination Agreement must be developed and submitted to the California Department of Water Resources (“DWR”) together with the three GSPs for the Basin. As foundation to the Coordination Agreement, and in accordance with Section 10727.6 of the Act, the Parties

further acknowledge and agree that their respective GSAs shall coordinate with each other in the preparation of the respective GSPs to ensure that the GSPs utilize the same data and methodologies for the following assumptions:

- Groundwater elevation data;
- Groundwater extraction data;
- Surface water supply;
- Total water use;
- Change in groundwater storage;
- Water budget; and
- Sustainable yield.

(c) Governance and decision-making processes within the individual GSAs shall be governed by the respective Memoranda of Agreement described in the Recitals above, as those documents may be modified or supplemented from time to time by applicable bylaws, policies, amendments, or other agreements.

3. Coordination Agreement. Because multiple GSPs will be developed for the Basin, the Parties agree that a Coordination Agreement shall be developed and entered in accordance with Sections 10727(b)(3), 10727.6, and 10733.4(b)(3) of the Act, and the requirements and elements set forth in Section 357.4 of Title 23 of the California Code of Regulations (“SGMA Regulations”) to ensure that the GSPs are developed and implemented utilizing the same data and methodologies and that elements of the GSPs necessary to achieve the sustainability goal for the Basin are based upon consistent interpretations of the basin setting.

Because developing and executing the Coordination Agreement is a prerequisite to filing the respective GSPs, the Parties agree to commence negotiation of the Coordination Agreement through their respective GSAs as soon as practicable, but no later than July 1, 2020. In the event that essential terms and elements of the Coordination Agreement, as set forth by Section 357.4 of the SGMA Regulations, have not been developed in draft for consideration by the Parties and the respective GSAs by June 1, 2021, any Party to this Agreement may demand in writing to the other Parties that the remaining process for developing and finalizing the Coordination Agreement be administered with the services of a mediator as provided by Section 7 below.

4. Sharing of DWR Grant Funds. The Parties acknowledge that the Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District (SYRWCD) is the grantee of a DWR Proposition 1 grant award of \$1,000,000 (“DWR Grant Funds”) on behalf of the respective GSAs for the three Management Areas and that such DWR Grant Funds are administered pursuant to the 2018 Grant Agreement Between the State of California (DWR) and the SYRWCD (“DWR Grant Agreement”). The Parties agree, individually and through their respective GSAs, that the DWR Grant Funds shall be shared and allocated equally (one-third each) among the WMA GSA, the CMA GSA, and the EMA GSA on behalf of the respective Management Areas for development of their

respective GSPs and related SGMA costs as authorized by the DWR Grant Agreement; and that if any GSA does not incur costs that are reimbursable from its respective one-third share of DWR Grant Funds, such unutilized funds shall be allocated equally (one-half each) to the two remaining GSAs; and that if either of the two remaining GSAs does not incur costs that are reimbursable from its one-half share of such remaining DWR Grant Funds, such unutilized funds shall be allocated to the one remaining GSA; and if the remaining GSA does not incur costs that are reimbursable from such remaining DWR Grant Funds, such unutilized funds shall be administered in accordance with the DWR Grant Agreement. Subject to the requirements of the DWR Grant Agreement, decisions related to the use and application of DWR Grant Funds within any given Management Area shall be made by the respective GSA for that Management Area.

5. Cost Sharing Among GSAs and Securing Joint Services.

- (a) The Parties anticipate the need or opportunity from time to time to perform certain services or activities that are common to and will benefit all three Management Areas and GSAs in preparing their respective GSPs, which services or activities otherwise would be funded individually through the GSAs, and where jointly securing and undertaking such services or activities can improve efficiencies in preparing the GSPs and save costs at a Basin-wide level. These common and mutually beneficial services, activities, and associated costs may include, but are not limited to, SGMA website development, data management systems, technical review, and administrative support. Any decision(s) on a case-by-case basis to secure and undertake services or activities that are common and mutually beneficial to the three Management Areas and GSAs, and to incur the costs associated with any such decision(s), shall require prior approval by all three GSAs, wherein the method, terms, and costs for securing and undertaking such services or activities shall be presented to each GSA as part of the aforementioned approval requirements.
- (b) Costs incurred for services or activities that are undertaken as described in Section 5(a) above shall be equally apportioned among and paid by the three GSAs (one-third each); provided, however, that each GSA shall make its own determination in coordination with SYRWCD of whether to seek reimbursement for its proportionate share of such costs from DWR Grant Funds made available to that GSA as described in Section 4 above. Cost sharing within the individual GSAs shall be administered in accordance with the terms of the WMA MOA, the CMA MOA, and the EMA MOA, along with any applicable amendments to those documents
- (c) SYRWCD shall coordinate cost sharing among the GSAs and administer any agreement or contract to provide such services or activities on behalf of the three GSAs as described in Section 5(a) above; provided, however, that SYRWCD may elect in the future not to provide such coordination or administration services, and provided further that the GSAs may agree in writing for a different Party or third-party to coordinate such cost sharing or to administer any such agreement or contract as part of the approval requirements described

in Section 5(a) above. The Parties agree that the costs incurred by SYRWCD or other Party or third-party for providing such coordination or administration services shall be apportioned and shared by the GSAs in accordance with this Section 5.

(d) Subject to the availability of DWR Grant Funds and other sources of funding that may be available to any of the GSAs, all other SGMA-related costs that are not shared among the three GSAs in accordance with this Agreement, including but not limited to those for preparation and implementation of their respective GSPs, shall be borne by the respective GSAs and Parties thereto in accordance with their respective Memoranda of Agreement described in the Recitals above, as those documents may be modified or supplemented from time to time by applicable bylaws, policies, amendments, or other agreements. Nothing in this Agreement is intended to nor shall limit any Party or any of the GSA from seeking recovery of SGMA-related costs, including but not limited to those for preparation or implementation of the GSPs, from water users and other persons and entities in any lawful manner, including but not limited to the authorities provided by SGMA.

6. Ongoing Cooperation. In accordance with the primary purpose of this Agreement, the Parties agree to coordinate with each other in good faith to ensure a cooperative and ongoing working relationship between the Parties and among the WMA GSA, the CMA GSA, and the EMA GSA that will allow them to explore, study, evaluate, develop, and carry out mutually beneficial approaches and strategies for implementing SGMA throughout the Basin in an effective, efficient, fair, and cost-effective manner. In furtherance of this purpose, each Party shall identify a principal contact person and other appropriate staff and/or consultant(s) to participate on such Party's behalf in carrying out this Agreement.

7. Dispute Resolution.

(a) The Parties agree to mediate any claim or dispute arising from this Agreement before filing any court action; provided, however, that any Party may elect not to mediate, where any Party that elects not to mediate or commences a court action based on a dispute or claim arising from this Agreement without first attempting to resolve the matter through mediation as provided in this Section 7 shall not be entitled to recover attorneys' fees or costs, even if such fees and costs otherwise would be available to that Party in any such action. A Party shall satisfy the requirement for "first attempting to resolve the matter through mediation" by proceeding or otherwise participating in accordance with the entire process set forth in Section 7(b) below.

(b) In the event of a claim or dispute, or where the Parties or respective GSAs cannot reach agreement on any matter arising under this Agreement, including but not limited to preparing GSPs in a coordinated fashion as described in Section 2(b) above, or developing a Coordination Agreement as described in Section 3 above, any Party may provide a written Notice of Dispute to the other Parties that describes in detail the claim or disputed matter ("Dispute"). Upon issuance of a Notice of Dispute, a meeting shall be conducted within

twenty (20) calendar days from the date of the Notice of Dispute among all Parties that elect to participate in the meeting as a good faith attempt to resolve the Dispute informally (“Informal Dispute Resolution”). In the event the Dispute is not resolved through Informal Dispute Resolution within thirty (30) calendar days from the date of the Notice of Dispute, the Party that initially provided the Notice of Dispute shall provide a separate written notification to all Parties that participated in the Informal Dispute Resolution process which identifies three mediator candidates, all of whom must be an attorney, engineer, or hydrogeologist experienced and familiar with SGMA, to mediate the Dispute (“Formal Dispute Resolution”). Furthermore, all mediator candidates must be unbiased neutrals who are not participants in any of the GSAs in the Basin and who are not officials, officers, employees, contractors, consultants, or agents of any of the Parties to this Agreement. Within ten (10) days of receiving a written notification of qualified mediator candidates, all Parties that elect to participate in such Formal Dispute Resolution may provide a written response consenting to one or more of the mediator candidates or identifying up to three additional qualified mediator candidates. Thereafter, if a mediator is not mutually-agreed upon by said participating Parties from the combined list within fifteen (15) calendar days, each party shall submit two potential mediators that they would approve and a mediator shall be picked by a non-party through random selection from the Parties’ combined lists of remaining mediators. Once initiated, the mediation shall be completed within 30 days.

(c) Mediation fees, if any, shall be divided equally among the Parties that elect to be involved in a mediation process pursuant to Section 7(b) above. Each Party involved in the mediation shall be responsible for its own attorneys’ fees and costs.

(d) This Section 7 shall not preclude any Party from meeting and conferring with any other Party or Parties to mutually resolve a dispute or claim prior to requesting or participating in the mediation processes described in Section 7(b) above.

(e) This Section 7 shall not preclude any Party from seeking a preliminary injunction or other interlocutory relief if necessary to avoid irreparable harm or damages.

8. Indemnification. To the extent authorized by law, each Party shall defend, indemnify, and hold harmless the other Parties and their respective elected officials, officers, supervisors, employees, agents, contractors, and consultants from and against any and all damages, demands, actions, claims, or liabilities for the indemnifying Party’s acts or omissions arising from carrying out this Agreement.

9. Miscellaneous/General Provisions.

(a) Notices. Any formal notice required or other formal communication given under the terms of this Agreement shall be in writing to all of the Parties and shall be given personally, by electronic mail (email), or by certified mail, postage prepaid and return receipt requested.

The date of receipt of any written notice provided hereunder shall be the date of actual personal service, or email, or three days after the postmark on certified mail.

- (b) Entire Agreement/Amendments/Counterparts. This Agreement incorporates the entire and exclusive agreement of the Parties with respect to the matters described herein and supersedes all prior negotiations and agreements (written, oral, or otherwise) related thereto, including the 2016 MOU; provided, however, this Agreement does not amend, supersede, or modify the WMA MOA, the CMA MOA, or the EMA MOA as described in the Recitals above, as those documents may be amended or supplemented. This Agreement may be amended (including without limitation to add new Parties) only in a writing executed by all of the Parties. This Agreement may be executed in two or more counterparts, each of which shall be deemed an original, but all of which together shall constitute one and the same instrument.
- (c) Termination/Withdrawal. This Agreement shall remain in effect unless terminated by the mutual consent of the Parties. Upon 30 days written notice to the other Parties, any Party may withdraw from this Agreement, and the Agreement shall remain in effect for the remaining Parties. No Party shall be liable to any other Party for electing to withdraw from this Agreement.
- (d) Assignment. No rights or duties of any of the Parties under this Agreement may be assigned or delegated without the express prior written consent of all of the other Parties, and any attempt to assign or delegate such rights or duties without such written consent shall be null and void.
- (e) Insurance. Each Party shall maintain its own insurance coverage through commercial insurance, self-insurance, or a combination thereof, against any claim, expense cost, damage or liability arising out of the performance of its responsibility pursuant to this Agreement, to the extent insurable.
- (f) Counsel. The Parties recognize that as of the Effective Date of this Agreement, independent legal counsel has not been retained to represent any of the three GSAs in the Basin. Until such time as any Party may decide otherwise within its sole and absolute discretion, each Party agrees, in its individual capacity and as a member agency of its respective GSA, to utilize its own legal counsel for all purposes, including but not limited to those related in any way to compliance with SGMA and any and all other legal requirements, to rely exclusively upon the legal advice of its own legal counsel, and to bear all of its own fees, costs, and expenses for legal counsel, including but not limited any experts or consultants retained through legal counsel on behalf of that Party. This arrangement shall not be construed in any way to create an attorney-client relationship or a duty of loyalty between an attorney and any Party other than the direct client of that attorney, and no such relationship will be deemed to arise by implication as a result of this

Agreement. The provisions of this Section 9(f) shall not be affected in the event, if any, that any or all of the GSAs in the Basin determine(s) to retain independent legal counsel.

- (g) CEQA. The Parties recognize and agree that, pursuant to 10728.6 of the Act and Public Resources Code Section 21065, neither this Agreement nor the preparation or adoption of a GSP constitutes a “project” or approval of a project under the California Environmental Quality Act (“CEQA”) or the State CEQA Guidelines.
- (h) No Third-Party Beneficiaries. This Agreement is not intended and shall not be construed to confer any benefit or create any right for any third party, or to provide the power or right of a third party to bring an action to enforce any of the terms of this Agreement.
- (i) Attorneys’ Fees and Costs. Subject to the provisions of Section 7 above, if any action at law or equity, including an action for declaratory relief, is brought to enforce or interpret the provisions of this Agreement, the prevailing Party or Parties, as determined by the court, shall be entitled to recover reasonable attorneys’ fees and costs which shall be determined by the court. The attorneys’ fees and costs to be awarded shall be made to fully reimburse the prevailing Party or Parties for all reasonable attorneys’ fees and costs, including but not limited to expert fees, costs, and expenses actually incurred in good faith, regardless of the size of the judgment or outcome of the action; provided, however, that recoverable fees awarded to any prevailing party shall not exceed the rate of three hundred and twenty-five dollars (\$325.00) per hour for attorneys or experts.
- (j) Authority/Binding Effect. Each Party represents and warrants that the individual(s) executing this Agreement is authorized to do so and thereby obligate such Party to perform all acts required by this Agreement, and that the consent, approval or execution of or by any third party is not required to legally bind the Party to this Agreement.
- (k) Incorporation of Recitals. The Recitals set for the above are hereby imported into this Agreement.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the Parties hereto have executed this Agreement as of the date first written above.

[Signature Pages Below]

FINAL DRAFT – AUGUST 2019

SANTA BARBARA COUNTY WATER AGENCY

ADD SIGNATURE BLOCK(S)

SANTA YNEZ RIVER WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

ADD SIGNATURE BLOCK(S)

**SANTA YNEZ RIVER WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT, IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT
NO.1**

ADD SIGNATURE BLOCK(S)

CITY OF SOLVANG

ADD SIGNATURE BLOCK(S)

CITY OF BUELLTON

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CITY OF LOMPOC

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VANDENBERG VILLAGE COMMUNITY SERVICES DISTRICT

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MISSION HILLS COMMUNITY SERVICES DISTRICT

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