

Los Osos Basin Management Committee

July 16, 2025

Agenda Item 8: Items Not on the Agenda

Comments about Sustainable Yield by Lynette Brooks

Once again, sustainable yield is not on the agenda. For years, the BMC has been ignoring the rising chloride metric and statements in the annual reports about worsening intrusion. You chose to use only the moving sustainable yield target as determined by the old model. Now you have a model that says sustainable yield is less than 1,830 acre-ft/yr, and you are not even discussing it. I realize the author of the model report is not currently available for questions, but he already wrote his report. Delaying a decision until he is available is irresponsible. Waiting to see if we ever get state water is irresponsible. The Stipulated Judgment states, "It is essential that the Basin Management Committee have flexibility to adapt to changing conditions," so please act on those changing conditions and reduce the estimate of sustainable yield for use in 2026 now. This is the only fair way to prevent future home owners from spending money on architects and engineers because they think they may be on the build list next year.

Once again, the BMC is holding a regular meeting during working hours. For some reason, when the county wanted to start development, a large meeting was held on a Saturday to convince people that the county knew what it was doing and everything was going to be okay. At that meeting, the public was assured that the old model was the best method to determine sustainable yield, and that a new model would be coming soon. Members of the public urged the county to wait for the new model, but the county proceeded with an out-of-date model. Now, however, when the new model is showing the basin is not sustainable, I have seen no notice that a large Saturday meeting is being scheduled. The LOBMC approved the sustainable yield number that led to the county approving new development and has just as much responsibility as the county to now go to the public and say, "we were wrong." At the meeting you can also talk about getting recycled water to the schools and community park and about new monitoring wells to collect better data about the basin.

The LOBMC also has the responsibility to go the County of Board of Supervisors and the California Coastal Commission and ask that development be halted because pumping is exceeding sustainable yield. This is what the citizens of Los Osos were promised. This is what protecting the groundwater in the basin means. This is what the Stipulated Judgment has required since 2015.

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Agenda Item 9: Executive Director's Report

Comments by Lynette Brooks

A few items in the report appear to be overstated. First, the deadline for the completion of the model was extended by the State Water Resources Board to incorporate data from the AEM survey into the model. From the report, however, AEM data was barely examined, and was not incorporated in the model. The only mention in the model report is that the AEM data show salinity under Morro Bay Estuary, and so does the model. Nothing is discussed about if the AEM data support the geologic definition of the aquifers. Second, the director's report states, "The Transient Model Construction/Calibration TM and Baseline Scenario Results were brought to the BMC at the regularly scheduled June 18, 2025 BMC meeting." This is technically true, but one member of this committee kept trying to prevent any discussion about the model, so the public has limited information about how the BMC plans to use the results of the model.

I am glad you are finally getting the schools and playing fields hooked up to the recycled waste water, even if it is 9 years after the timeline shown in the Basin Plan. I am curious why Los Osos Memorial Park has not been connected, especially since the cost would be minimal given the proximity to the treatment plant.

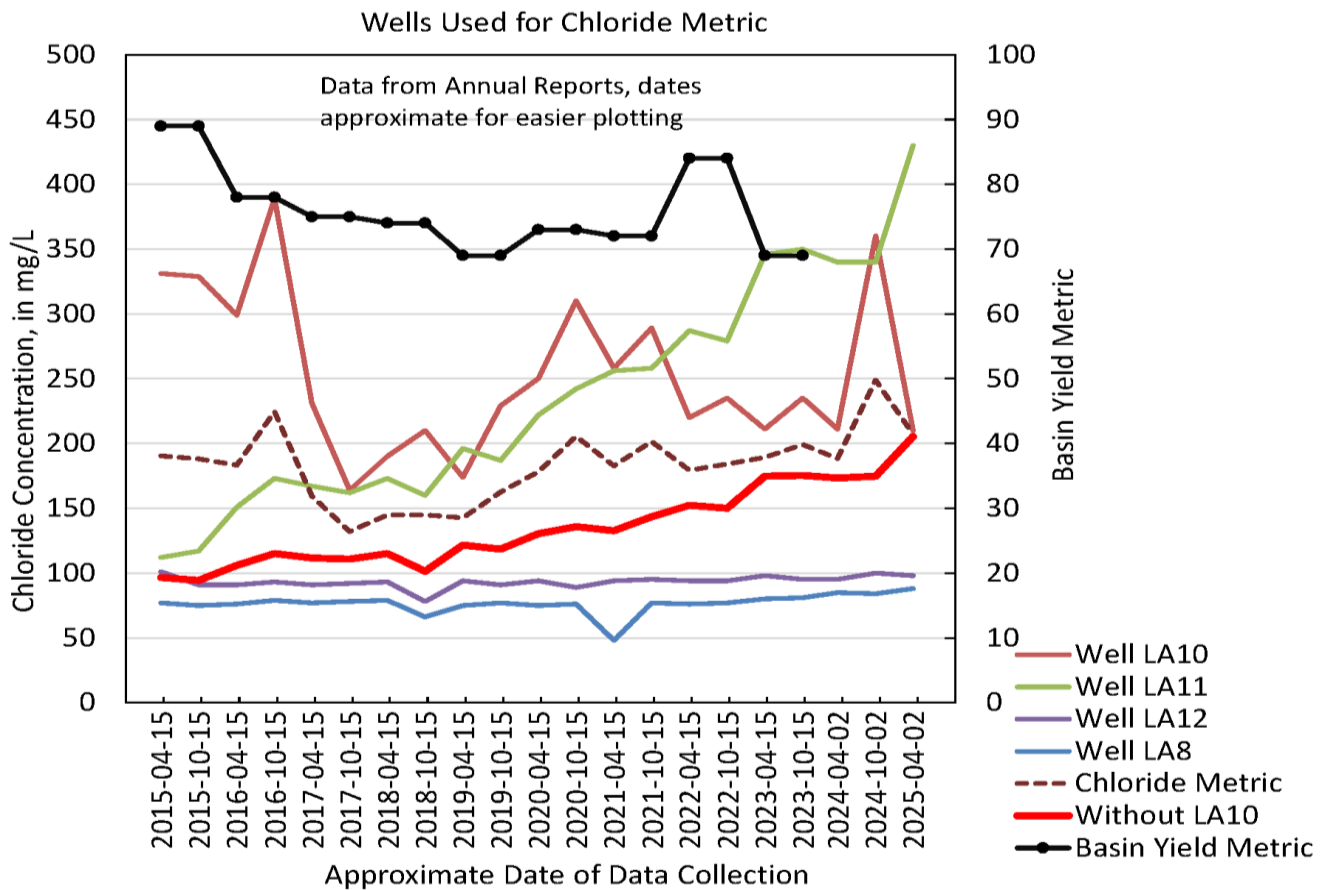
The most important part of the Director's report, however, is the section about the Water Resiliency Intertie, where it is stated, "Recent findings from the Basin Management Committee (BMC), including results of the Baseline Scenario from the newly developed Transient Groundwater Model, underscore the urgency of improving water supply sustainability." LOCSO is confident that the new model is correct and they are committing up to \$756,000 for design services for the intertie project. It is time for the other directors to also agree that the current pumping is not sustainable.

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Agenda Item 10b: Metrics
Comments by Lynette Brooks

The chloride metric is the highest spring metric ever recorded, even with the weird double counting for Well LA10, which had its lowest concentration since 2019. If the troublesome Well LA10 is removed, the metric shows a much more consistent upward trend. Well LA11 experienced a 90 mg/L jump in chloride concentration. Well LA8 has a small, but consistently increasing chloride concentration. Clearly the management of the last 10 to 15 years has not been working to reduce the chloride metric. Because the “adaptive management” definition of sustainable yield does not care happens at Well LA11 and Well LA8 (along with most of Baywood), the only way for these wells to have impacts on management is through the chloride metric, so please pay more attention to it.

Why is the Spring water-level metric not included in the chart showing the metrics?



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Agenda Item 10a: Water Supply Alternatives

Comments by Lynette Brooks

I am glad you are moving forward with supply analysis, but given the problems with model calibration as pointed out by the reviewers, the prediction simulations may not accurately predict the rapid increase of chloride concentration that is evident in the data. Any supply analysis needs to account for the uncertainty in the model. The analyses should also account for extended drought periods and the possibility of less precipitation with climate change. This could be done in a simple way by reducing all recharge from precipitation by a select percentage, or in a more accurate way by rerunning the recharge pre-processor with less precipitation and more evapotranspiration.

Most of the possibilities for reuse seem reasonable, but the idea of putting advanced purified water into the drinking water system will create public opposition. Getting the treatment plant was a battle, do you really want to tell people you want them to drink the water? A better alternative would be to develop a secondary water system to supply irrigation water to residents and businesses in select locations. There is not enough recycled water to do this throughout the entire community, so efforts could be concentrated where the most water could be used with the least amount of pipeline construction and pumping. This could include areas close to the pipeline to Broderson Leach Fields or the pipelines supplying Sea Pines and the schools. This method has been used in Utah, and maybe other states, for decades, and would not require advanced treatment.

I have also seen that Morro Bay has an advanced treatment plant and an ocean outfall. While building the intertie for the state water, could another pipeline be built to bring over Morro Bay treated water that is currently going to the ocean and use that for injection or irrigation?