

The Indian Wells Valley Groundwater Authority (Authority) is attempting to convince local residents and stakeholders that the massive replenishment fee imposed on a select few water users in the region is the right path forward to balance the Valley's over-drafted groundwater basin. This is not true. The Authority's Groundwater Sustainability Plan and the exorbitant replenishment fee will devastate our local economy.

THE AUTHORITY WANTS YOU TO BELIEVE:

The Authority has a plan for balancing the groundwater basin with new water supply sources.

The Authority's adoption of the Groundwater Sustainability Plan and replenishment fee was a collaborative and inclusive process.

The Authority's "replenishment fee" will replenish the groundwater basin.

The Authority's replenishment fee is reasonable.

The Authority's plan equitably distributes basin water among the region's many water users.

The Navy needs the groundwater basin's entire sustainable yield.

The Navy should be given a priority over and above all other uses in the basin.

The Authority has taken Searles' senior water rights into consideration.

Searles has declined an offer to use recycled wastewater from the City of Ridgecrest instead of pumping groundwater.

THE FACT IS:

The Authority has not provided any real plans for developing or bringing in new sources of water – a yet-to-be defined effort that will take many years and many millions of dollars.

The Authority largely ignored stakeholders' input. This was evident in the record turnout in the community protest vote against the Authority's exorbitant replenishment fee.

Without a clear plan, the replenishment fee will not bring a single drop of water to the basin.

The proposed replenishment fee will increase Searles' water costs by 7,000 percent or \$6 million per year. This will force the company out of business and leave 700 community members without a job.

The Authority's scheme picks winners and losers. It puts the cost burden on the backs of a select few, particularly Searles, and exempts other large pumpers, including the U.S. Navy (Navy) and others.

The Navy has publicly stated that it does not need nor has it requested the entire sustainable yield of the basin.

Searles has priority pre-Navy water rights that go back 90 years. California's Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) does not allow the Authority to determine water rights. This is the core of the Searles lawsuit.

The Authority has verbally and publicly acknowledged that Searles has a "strong argument for pre-Navy rights" but ignored these senior water rights when developing and adopting the groundwater sustainability plan and pumping fees.

Searles has expressed interest in using recycled water and assisting in the development of a treatment facility, however, the unreasonable conditions imposed by the Authority unrelated to the use of recycled water have created a barrier to moving forward.