

TURLOCK JOURNAL

Denair meeting to address drought, groundwater concerns

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The region's ever-dwindling supply of water is a concern for all local residents. In an effort to inform and promote discussion about the drought, groundwater issues and water conservation efforts, the Stanislaus County Water Advisory Committee is holding a public meeting in Denair on Wednesday.

"This is an opportunity not only for us to inform the public regarding what the County is doing for the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act, but to give them an opportunity to ask questions if they have any," said Supervisor Vito Chiesa. "There is a lot of interest there."

The meeting will discuss ongoing County actions and strategies pertaining to the existing multi-year drought through presentations provided by Stanislaus County Water Resources Program Manager Walter Ward, as well as County staff.

Ward will discuss what the County has been doing specifically regarding SGMA and talk about various resources offered by the

County to help residents mitigate the effects of the drought, including low-interest loans for homeowners who need to replace dry wells.

Additionally, Ward will provide residents with information pertaining to the Temporary Water Assistance Program, which resulted from a partnership between the County and Self-Help Enterprises that was approved in July. Through this program, Stanislaus County residents with dry wells can receive regular water deliveries while they wait for a newer or deeper well to be completed.

"With over 50 dry wells being reported in Stanislaus County, staff sought to find a program that would provide a temporary option while a long-term solution is being reached," said Stanislaus County Fire Warden and Assistant Director Emergency Services Dale Skiles in July.

"In developing a temporary solution for homeowners, our goals have been to provide something that is responsive to the needs and can be quickly deployed," continued Skiles

Afterwards, there will be an opportunity for guests to ask questions and participate in an open discussion period facilitated by Chiesa, who oversees unincorporated areas such as Denair, Hickman, Keyes and La Grange in County Supervisorial District 2.

Chiesa said that although the information will be beneficial to everyone, it will be especially advantageous for those who reside in unincorporated areas. He hopes that this meeting will let residents know about all the ways that the County can assist them through the drought, especially those who live in unincorporated areas.

"I want people to understand what we're doing and that the County is working hard," said Chiesa. "If your well goes dry, this meeting will let you know all of the programs that are available."

The meeting is scheduled from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. on Wednesday at the Denair Community Center, 3850 Gratton Rd. For more information, call 652-1514.