



Tim Carson &lt;admin@midcountygroundwater.org&gt;

## Comment on September 18, 2025 Agenda Item 6.3 and Repeated Request for Presentation of AEM Analysis and Reports

2 messages

Becky Steinbruner &lt;ki6tkb@yahoo.com&gt;

Wed, Sep 17, 2025 at 11:06 AM

To: MidCounty Groundwater Agency Board &lt;comment@midcountygroundwater.org&gt;

Cc: Becky Steinbruner &lt;ki6tkb@yahoo.com&gt;

Dear MidCounty Groundwater Agency Board,

I have read the agenda packet and want to request a public presentation of the AEM analysis report recently completed by GIP;

(Item 6.3 pg. 72)

*"In 2022, the Department of Water Resources conducted AEM surveys in high- and medium-priority groundwater basins throughout California, including Basins in Santa Cruz County. The flightlines of 2017 and 2022 AEM surveys were not identical, however **there are some areas where the surveys overlapped or were in close proximity.***

*In December 2024, the MGA Executive Team approved the sole source selection of Geophysical Imaging Partners (GIP) to evaluate the 2017 and 2022 AEM investigations **with a focus on saltwater intrusion in the area from Rio Del Mar to La Selva Beach to investigate the presence of increasing chlorides in the Seascapes area.** Mr. Halkjaer, previously of Ramboll, is now a partner with GIP and was determined to be uniquely qualified to conduct an evaluation of the two surveys. The objective of the investigation was to ensure that the two datasets were processed using the same procedures and techniques to ensure the data were comparable. In March 2025, an amendment to the agreement added an additional task to consider available alternatives for additional analysis. **The processing of the data was successfully completed at a cost of \$9,800. The data will be incorporated into the report on the current seawater intrusion investigation"***

Here are my comments:

1) The GIP evaluation should also include the common flight lines that covered the areas near beaches to provide a comparison of the status of the potential advancement saltwater intrusion interface. Did it?

2) The GIP evaluation should be presented publicly to the MGA Board and the public. When will this presentation be scheduled and how can the information be publicly accessed?

3) The GSP stated that there would be a follow-up AEM evaluation conducted by the MGA in 2022. (page 27 and page 410)

*5.1.1.4.5 Data Collection: Offshore Airborne Electromagnetics Geophysical Surveys*

*In May 2017, the MGA successfully completed an offshore Airborne Electromagnetic (AEM) geophysical survey to assess groundwater salinity levels and map the approximate location of the saltwater/freshwater interface in the offshore groundwater aquifers. **This important data will inform the assessment of the extent and progress of seawater intrusion into the Basin and the management responses. The MGA anticipates repeating the AEM survey on a five-year interval (2022) to identify movement of the interface and assess seawater intrusion.** The estimated cost is presented in Table 5-1.*

[https://www.midcountygroundwater.org/sites/default/files/uploads/MGA\\_GSP\\_2019.pdf](https://www.midcountygroundwater.org/sites/default/files/uploads/MGA_GSP_2019.pdf)

The State's unorthodox AEM flight lines did not satisfy the MGA's plan to repeat the 2017 AEM study to determine the whether the saltwater /freshwater interface had changed, and that would verify the extent of the saltwater intrusion issue in the Basin.

4) The MGA Executive Committee narrowed the focus of the comparison of the 2017 and 2022 analysis to only include the Seascapes area, but should have include the shoreline flight patterns as well. In effect, the GSP intention

has not been fulfilled.

5) The GSP stated on page 406 that the MGA would budget \$30,000 annually to accrue to the anticipated \$150,000 cost of a new AEM study every five years. Therefore, since the MGA did not conduct any AEM study in 2022 or since the 2017 initial AEM study, **there is money available in the budget for a new AEM study that will comply with the terms of the GSP approved by the State and give a clear picture to the MGA and the public the status of the seawater intrusion.** The GIP comparative analysis cost was \$9,800.

6) It is imperative that the MGA conduct a new AEM study, repeating the flight lines of the 2017 AEM study, before the PureWater Soquel Project and/or City ASR projects become operational in order to determine and verify the true effectiveness of the individual projects.

Otherwise, how would the MGA be able to scientifically verify the impacts of the seawater intrusion well project component that have been significantly funded with public monies?

7) It is imperative that Montgomery & Associates have this critical data to accurately inform the modeling work those consultants are doing for the grant-funded Water Optimization Analysis work that appears to be on-going and will be critical to effective and efficient operation of the PureWater Soquel Project and the City of Santa Cruz's ASR work.

**Therefore, I again request, as I have done so publicly at the past three MGA Board meetings, that the MGA immediately fund a new AEM study that will follow the 2017 flight lines. It is critical that the work commence this year and before any of the PureWater Soquel Project's three SWIP wells become operational.**

Please respond.  
Thank you.  
Sincerely,  
Becky Steinbruner

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**Santa Cruz Mid-County Groundwater Agency** <admin@midcountygroundwater.org>

Wed, Sep 17, 2025 at 4:25  
PM

To: Becky Steinbruner <ki6tkb@yahoo.com>

Cc: MidCounty Groundwater Agency Board <comment@midcountygroundwater.org>

Dear Ms. Steinbruner,

This email confirms receipt of your comments submitted via email earlier today. The Board will be informed of your comments.

Thank you for your interest in groundwater management in the Santa Cruz Mid-County Groundwater Basin.

Best regards,  
Tim Carson

**Administrative Services**

SANTA CRUZ MID-COUNTY GROUNDWATER AGENCY

5180 Soquel Drive | Soquel, CA 95073

831.204.0008 *voicemail*

[admin@midcountygroundwater.org](mailto:admin@midcountygroundwater.org) | [www.midcountygroundwater.org](http://www.midcountygroundwater.org)

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