

GMD 3 Annual Meeting

March 12, 2025

The stems we used were:

It is more of a priority for my region to reach Q stable than other regions.

The vast majority of wells need to see a reduction in use—regardless of the plan chosen.

Recent use should be factored into allocation

Everyone should take the same percentage cut.

Irrigated and non-irrigation use should be treated the same.

Only irrigators should be cut.

Plan calculations should be based on irrigated acreage.

We asked participants to indicate their level of agreement with the statements by signaling with one the following.

Endorse	Agree with reservation	Mixed Feelings	I disagree, but won't block	100% disagree
5	4	3	2	1

The information on the following pages includes a summary of comments across regions. The tables include the level of agreement recorded for each county group by the board member, these should be interpreted as the participants level of agreement on the day of the event, not as a vote. Not all of the board members reported the actual number indicated by each participant, thus the individual numbers are listed in the table, not illustrated in a graph.



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TIME TO STABLE

Diverging Opinions on Urgency

- Immediate Action Advocates: Waiting too long risks wells running dry.
- Gradual Transition Advocates: The problem took decades to develop and should be addressed slowly to avoid harm.
- Some Believe Natural Stability is Happening: Data may not show the whole picture, as decreased pumping has already had positive effects.
- Realistic Targets: 5 years is unrealistic, 10 years is ambitious, and 15 years is more practical.

Economic and Policy Adjustments

- Tax Incentives: Changes in tax codes could assist compliance.
- Market Shifts: Demand for new crops must align with changes in water availability.
- State Role: Some feel overdevelopment was allowed, creating this issue, and state support is needed to offset.
- Slower adjustments may soften economic harm; moderate reductions may be enough to reach stability.
- Flexibility is Key: Plans should be adaptable and consider responsible water users without formal documentation.

External and Regional Factors

- Recharge from Colorado: Some worry that expected water inflows will not materialize.
- Local Stability Variations: For areas that are stable at current rates, rapid changes could harm existing plans.
- Different Needs by Sector: Farmers and vendors have varying timelines for adjustment.
- Regional Approach Needed: Solutions must account for differences across areas while recognizing shared responsibility.

Potential Solutions for Faster Stability

- Incentive Programs: Personal and group incentives could help users manage reductions.
- Flexible Water Rights: Banking water and grouping rights could make transitions easier.
- Financial Support: Assistance is necessary to help during difficult transition periods.

Gray & Ford	75% 10 year One 5, rest 15	Seward & Meade	1 5 3 10 1 15 1 20
Hamilton, Stanton, Morton	2 10 years 18 30 years	Stevens	2 10 2 15 1 30
Kearny Finney	1 5 8 10 8 15 1 20 1 30	Grant & Haskell	4 5 3 10 3 15 2 20



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VAST MAJORITY OF WELLS NEED TO TAKE A REDUCTION

General Reduction & Fairness Concerns

- Municipalities already take a significant share—up to 20%.
- Reductions must be fair, especially for smaller allotments.
- No winners or losers; a plan is needed to ensure fairness.

Farmer Involvement & Flexibility

- Enterprise-level decisions and cropping systems impact flexibility.
- Farmers should be included in decision-making.
- An appeal process is needed to adjust water rights if savings can be proven.

Planning & Policy Challenges

- Uncertainty in how reductions will impact those who haven't pumped recently.
- Current laws may not change, raising concerns over who makes decisions.
- Water banking should be considered for future use.

Well-Specific Challenges

- Not all wells can reach their max pumping capacity.
- Wells already at recharge should not face the same reductions as others.
- Cutting a 1.4 acre-foot (af) well is different from cutting a 2af well.
- Large users (500af) should not compete under the same rules as smaller users (300af).
- Past reporting inaccuracies—before meters, many claimed to pump 2af.

Industry & Economic Considerations

- Higher-value industries should be protected economically.
- Industrial and livestock users may not need the same reductions.
- Different water uses shouldn't be lumped together, but they are interconnected.

Gray & Ford	3&4 75% 3 was the majority of the 75%, 2 were the remainder
Hamilton, Stanton, Morton	2 2 2 2 2 2 2 3 3 3 3 3 4 4 4 5 5
Kearny Finney	1 1 2 2 2 2 2 3 3 3 3 3 3 5
Seward & Meade	2, 2, 3, 3, 4,
Stevens	1,2 3,3
Grant & Haskell	4 4 4 4 4 4 5 5 5 5 5 5

Endorse	Agree with reservation	Mixed Feelings	I disagree, but won't block	100% disagree
5	4	3	2	1



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RECENT USE SHOULD BE FACTORED IN

General Reduction & Fairness Concerns

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- No winners or losers; a plan is needed to ensure fairness.

Farmer Involvement & Flexibility

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- Farmers should be included in decision-making.
- Need an appeal process to adjust water rights if savings can be proven.

Planning & Policy Challenges

- Uncertainty in how reductions will impact those who haven't pumped recently.
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Industry & Economic Considerations

- Higher-value industries should be protected economically.
- Industrial and livestock users may not need the same reductions.
- Different water uses shouldn't be lumped together, but they are interconnected.

Gray & Ford	4 all except 1- 2
Hamilton, Stanton, Morton	1 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 3 3 3 3 4 4 5
Kearny Finney	Did Not Answer
Seward & Meade	1, 2, 2, 2, 2, 3
Stevens	2, 2, 4
Grant & Haskell	1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 2 2 2 4

Endorse	Agree with reservation	Mixed Feelings	I disagree, but won't block	100% disagree
5	4	3	2	1



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EVERYONE SHOULD TAKE SAME PERCENTAGE CUT

Equal Percentage Cuts vs. Customization

- Consideration needed for seniority of water rights, especially vested ones.
- Customization may be necessary for those on the edge of the aquifer who have already been impacted.
- Allocation could be based on acres irrigated vs. wet acres, with potential floor protection.

Disagreements & Variability Concerns

- Water availability varies across regions.
- Different levels of inputs have been invested in the ground.

Economic & Practical Challenges

- Everyone should feel some impact, but well situations vary.
- A 10-20% cut on a low allotment is insignificant, while the same cut on a high producer has a major economic effect.

Industry-Specific Considerations

- All irrigators should be treated the same.
- Livestock and cities should be exempt from reductions.

Endorse	Agree with reservation	Mixed Feelings	I disagree, but won't block	100% disagree
5	4	3	2	1

Gray & Ford	4 – 2, 1 -3, rest 1-
Hamilton, Stanton, Morton	Did not Asnswer
Kearny Finney	1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 2 4
Seward & Meade	1, 1, 2,2,3,4,
Stevens	1, 3,3,3
Grant & Haskell	3 3 3 3 3 3 4 4 4 5 5 5 5



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IRRIGATED & NON IRRIGATION SHOULD BE TREATED THE SAME

Different Treatment for Municipalities & Industries

- Municipalities are already treated differently.
- Some industries, like dairies, can reduce water on the farming side but cannot stop watering livestock.
- Livestock water needs remain constant, making cuts more difficult.
- Cities may need more water in the future—uncertainty about state policies on city water shutdowns.

Conservation & Fairness Concerns

- Corn circles and other irrigated farms have conservation capacities different from those of municipalities or livestock.
- Some argue all water users should work together to find solutions.
- Communities should be required to report and make conservation efforts.
- Not all communities are making equal efforts to conserve or reuse water.
- Businesses and communities that bought water rights years ago should not be penalized for planning ahead.

Economic & Policy Challenges

- Cutting irrigators while golf courses and urban yards remain green is controversial.
- High economic impact users could buy additional water rights to offset reductions.
- Water Conservation Areas (WCAs) allow water movement between wells without physical connections—there’s confusion on rules and limitations.
- Negotiation processes for cuts and reallocations remain unclear.

Usage & Seasonal Differences

- Water use varies significantly between irrigation, industrial, and municipal sectors.
- Feed yards and dairies are improving efficiency, but seasonal pumping differences make direct comparisons difficult.
- No clear gallon-for-gallon equivalency exists between sectors.

Gray & Ford	3&4 about equal with a couple of 2s-
Hamilton, Stanton, Morton	1 2 2 2 2 2 3 4 4 4 5
Kearny Finney	1 1 1 1 2 2 3 4 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5
Seward & Meade	3, 3, 4, 4, 5, 5,
Stevens	1, 1, 1, 4
Grant & Haskell	1 1 1 1 1 1 2 2 2 2 5 3 5



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ONLY IRRIGATORS SHOULD BE CUT

Unified Approach vs. Sector-Specific Cuts

- Overcomplicating by analyzing industry-by-industry or economic impact may slow progress.
- Achieving water reduction goals is faster if all sectors work together.
- Various industries in the region are symbiotic and interrelated and should be treated as such.

Livestock & Industry Exemptions

- Livestock water needs remain constant and cannot be reduced like irrigation.
- Feed yards and dairies support local markets, making it difficult to see them expand while irrigators cut back.
- Dairies should also find ways to adjust to reductions.

Fairness & Historical Conservation Efforts

- Voluntary cuts made in the last 5-10 years should be factored into future reductions.
- Cities should take reductions similar to irrigators and follow historical conservation efforts.
- Everyone must work together to find a fair solution.

Endorse	Agree with reservation	Mixed Feelings	I disagree, but won't block	100% disagree
5	4	3	2	1

Gray & Ford	1 Unanimous except 1 2
Hamilton, Stanton, Morton	Did not answer
Kearny Finney	Felt they answered in previous question
Seward & Meade	1,1,1,1,1,1
Stevens	1, 1, 1, 1
Grant & Haskell	1 1 1 1 2 2 4 4 4 4 3 3 3



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PLAN CALCULATIONS SHOULD BE BASED ON IRRIGATED ACREAGE

Acreage-Based Allocation & Fairness

- Plan should be based on irrigated acres, not non-irrigated or unavailable land.
- Using wet acres ensures fairness—corners aren't being flooded anymore.
- Concerns over how reallocation might impact land value.
- Farmers without allocated corner acres should not be at a disadvantage when everyone is just watering circles.

Flexibility & Economic Considerations

- The plan needs flexibility to account for unforeseen issues.
- Farmers should have flexibility in crop choices.
- Water should be allocated by water rights with percentage cuts based on base rights.
- Flexibility is needed to ensure economic viability.

Water Rights & Conservation

- Some fear losing original water rights if changes are made.
- Water rights shouldn't be permanently locked in because someone chose not to redrill.
- Prior conservation efforts should be considered in future allocations.

Municipal & Regulatory Factors

- Municipalities are already regulated to use only 89% of the allocation when transferring ag wells to city use.

Double Cropping Considerations

- Double cropping can impact water use, with pivots using full allocations—e.g., 250 acre-feet vs. 320 acre-feet.

Endorse	Agree with reservation	Mixed Feelings	I disagree, but won't block	100% disagree
5	4	3	2	1

Gray& Ford	1 -3, most 4, a couple 5-
Hamilton, Stanton, Morton	Did Not Answer
Kearny Finney	1 11 2 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 5
Seward & Meade	2, 3,3,3,3,4
Stevens	3, 3, 3, 4
Grant & Haskell	1 1 1 1 1 1 3 3 3 3 4 4 5

