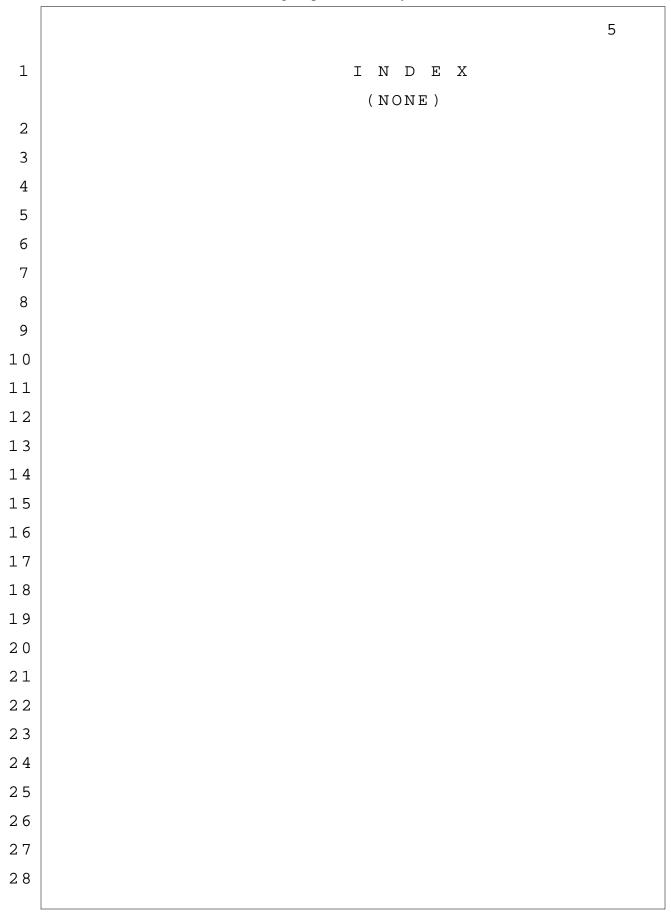
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           SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA
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                  FOR THE COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
 3
                    SPRING STREET COURTHOUSE
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     DEPT 10 HON. WILLIAM H. HIGHBERGER, JUDGE PRESIDING
 6
 7
     SANTA BARBARA CHANNELKEEPER, a
     California non-profit corporation,
 8
                      Plaintiff,
 9
                  V.
                                            ) No. 19STCP01176
10
     STATE WATER RESOURCES CONTROL BOARD,)
11
     et al.,
                      Defendants.
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17
              REPORTER'S TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS
                 MONDAY, MAY 10, 2021, 1:30 P.M.
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                           Reported by:
2.7
                           ALEXANDER T. JOKO, CSR No. 12272
28
                           Court Reporter Pro Tem
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1 2	IN-PERSON APPEARANCES OF COUNSEL:	
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20 21	NOAH GOLDEN-KRASNER	
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24 25	FOR AERA ENERGY, LLC:	
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1	APPI	EARANCES ((CONTINUED):	
2				
3	FOR	CALIFORNIA	A DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATI	ON:
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15				
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16			BY: PETER GOLDENRING	
17	707			
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19			HANSON BRIDGETT BY: NATHAN METCALF	
20			BI. NAIHAN MEICALF	
21				
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22	1 011		TEETOTI TOTOTIE WITTER CONTINUT	
			FERGUSON CASE ORR PATERSON LLP	
23			BY: JESSICA WAN	
24				
25	FOR	ROBERT MAR	RTIN:	
26			OSSENTIJUK & BOTTI	
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27				
28				

		4
1	APPEARANCES (CONTINUED):	
2		
3	FOR SANTA BARBARA CHANNELKEEPER:	
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8	BY: DAVID FARKAS	
9		
1.0	FOR AGR BREEDING, INC.:	
10	ALSTON & BIRD	
11	BY: GINA ANGIOLILLO	
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13 14	FOR VENTURA LAND TRUST: MORRISON & FOERSTER	
	BY: PATRICIA TSAO	
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19	LOA E. BLISS	
20		
21		
2223		
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25		
26 27		
28		

Hearing Dept. SS10 - May 10, 2021



6 1 Case Number: 19STCP01176 2 Case Name: Santa Barbara Channelkeepers 3 vs. State Water Resources 4 Control Board, et al. 5 Los Angeles, California Monday, May 10, 2021 6 Department 10 Judge William H. Highberger 7 Appearances: (As heretofore noted.) Alexander Joko, CSR No. 12272 8 Reporter: 9 Time: 1:30 P.M. 10 11 (The following proceedings were held 12 in open court:) 13 14 THE COURT: We're on the record in 15 19STCP01176, Santa Barbara Channelkeeper versus State 16 Water Resources Control Board. 17 We've got various lawyers before us. I 18 need to get the computer set up so the reporter has the benefit of it. 19 20 In the good-news category, I've never had 21 a happier report from my clerk's office about 22 processing requests for dismissal. They were almost 23 giddy with joy that things are going so well. 2.4 Okay. And most people have taken the 25 safe approach of using audio. 26 The court reporter should be able to see 27 who is speaking based on the way the audio feeds will 2.8 show. If he has a problem because we don't know who is

talking via L.A. Court Connect, it's probably the course of wisdom to give us your name first and not rely on the technology working right.

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We have lawyers in the courtroom, Hagerty at counsel table with the red tie, Mr. Pisano at the podium and Mr. Cosgrove for a different party over there with the gray tie.

As I indicated, my clerk's office indicates that the defaults are going well even at 200 at a time. I didn't hold out hope, but I will give a pat on the head for your paralegal at Best, Best & Krieger because that's an excellent sign.

Is there anybody who wishes to be heard who opposes the order to show cause re: issuing an order allowing service by publication of certain people who are located in locked residence without a gate guard who can let the process server onto the property?

Hearing no objection, I'm going to grant

Any reason I shouldn't?

your order, Mr. Pisano and Mr. Hagerty.

MR. PISANO: Not from us, your Honor.

THE COURT: Okay. And Exhibit A currently

lists 49 names, and that's what you want signed?

MR. PISANO: Yes, your Honor.

Although, we received two notices of acknowledgment and receipts this morning from the Lansbergs. They are numbers 13 and 38 on Exhibit A.

THE COURT: So cross out 13, Edward Lansberg

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1
     and cross out 38 --
 2
              MR. PISANO:
                          Yes.
 3
              THE COURT:
                          -- of Patricia Lansberg?
              MR. PISANO: Yes, your Honor.
 4
 5
              THE COURT:
                          That gets us down to 47 humans,
 6
     not necessarily at 47 addresses.
7
              MR. PISANO:
                           Correct, your Honor.
8
              THE COURT:
                          So it was 51 hard-to-reach people,
9
     but it wasn't necessarily 51 addresses?
10
              MR. PISANO:
                           Correct, your Honor.
11
              THE COURT:
                          The order is signed. You may
12
     proceed to send some money to the Ventura Star --
13
              MR. PISANO: Thank you, your Honor.
              THE COURT:
                          I got your posting on File &
14
15
     ServeXpress about a modified schedule for sharing the
16
     physical solution with the Court. I'm a patient man.
17
     I'm certainly willing to consent to the delay.
18
                   Is there somebody who wants to object to
19
     this revised schedule that was on the posting?
20
                   For the sake of clarity, I can state what
21
     I understand it to be, which is that it goes to the
22
     parties, but not the Court, on May 17. It's available
23
     for lodging with the Court on June 21. But it won't be
     lodged until the Court, on June 21, deals with
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25
     objections to this process. Objections can be filed no
26
     later than June 14. I'll resolve those objections on
27
     June 21. And if there are no objections or I overrule
28
     the objections, the lodgement will occur. If I am
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persuaded by one or more of the objections, the lodgement may be further deferred or perhaps never happen, and then we'll never have a physical solution and something else will happen.

MR. PISANO: Yes, your Honor.

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THE COURT: So anybody wish to quarrel with this proposal that was put forward by Mr. Hagerty and Mr. Pisano earlier today?

Hearing no objection, I'll adopt that as a modified schedule for the sharing of the physical solution.

Based on your joint report, it wasn't clear there was much else you wanted me to address today.

Mr. Hagerty or Mr. Pisano, what else do you want me to address today?

MR. PISANO: Nothing else, your Honor, other than we have some Roe cross-defendants who we are in the process of serving. And we have some more issues regarding persons living behind locked gates with no quard.

We were hoping that the Court could possibly set an OSC for the next status conference, and we will just follow the same procedure.

I mapped out the dates based on what we did today. And that would be filing an application and a notice of OSC by June 7th, serving everything by Fed Ex as of that date, and then filing all of our

10 1 service papers by June 16th. 2 THE COURT: Anyone object to the Court issuing 3 an OSC, returnable on Monday, June 21 at 1:30 p.m., why 4 these certain additional Roe cross-defendants shouldn't 5 be served by publication given the practical inability to serve them in locked houses where they live without 6 7 a gate guard providing access? Hearing no objection, I'll make that 8 9 order, setting that order to show cause returnable in 10 this department on Monday, June 21 at 1:30 p.m. with 11 cross-complainant, City of Buenaventura, to give 12 notice. 13 Remind me, they're Roe -- sure, because it's a cross-complaint. That's why they're "Roe" and 14 15 not a "Doe." But you're still the same party filing 16 the pleading. You are just going to be Roe amending? 17 MR. PISANO: Correct, your Honor. 18 THE COURT: Okay. So far so good. 19 What else? 20 That's all, your Honor. MR. PISANO: 21 THE COURT: Mr. Cosgrove, anything --22 MR. COSGROVE: Nothing. Thank you, your 23 Honor. 2.4 THE COURT: Is Casitas getting any happier 25 with the physical solution? 26 MR. COSGROVE: Casitas is examining it

closely. We have another board meeting on that topic

27

28

this week.

1 THE COURT: Okay. 2 MR. PATTERSON: Your Honor, this is Greg 3 Patterson on behalf of a number of agricultural interests and Thacher School, et cetera. 4 5 I have one -- I haven't been able to talk 6 to any counsel about this --7 THE COURT: Stop. You're breaking up, so the 8 court reporter couldn't get anything --9 MR. PATTERSON: Can you hear me? 10 THE COURT: Mr. Patterson? Mr. Patterson, 11 please, slower and annunciate. 12 MR. PATTERSON: Okay. This is Greg Patterson 13 on behalf of Thacher School and a number of other 14 agricultural interests. 15 I haven't had a chance to talk to other 16 counsel about this, but I was going back over the other 17 rulings of the Court. And the Court, on February 9th, 18 ordered that initial disclosures are due June 1, 2021 19 for parties who have appeared by March 1st, which is a 20 substantial number of parties. 21 And I'm wondering whether, given the 22 motion to bifurcate that will be filed, that should be 23 continued? 2.4 And, perhaps, my suggestion would be that 25 I would be happy to talk to Plaintiff and some of the 26 other counsel about whether that's appropriate at this 27 time.

The motion to bifurcate may cause a bunch

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of parties to be dropped off of what would be a potential physical solution potentially. And I'm wondering whether that exercise should be continued?

THE COURT: I'm agnostic.

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Maybe Mr. Hagerty or Mr. Pisano have a thought.

MR. HAGERTY: Your Honor, we were not pushing for that process originally. So I guess we would be happy to talk with Mr. Patterson about it.

However, now that it's sort of in process and people are all working on it, we see some value in going ahead with it.

We believe that the -- I mean, we've expressed our position with regard to the first phase and what we think will come of that. We don't think parties will be dropping off after the first phase. We would hope it would encourage parties to move toward the physical solution.

So I guess I don't have a strong position on it, your Honor. I guess we could -- we would be happy to meet and confer with Mr. Patterson and other parties.

We do see some value in it now that the process is moving forward, and the parties are moving toward that disclosure.

We've also prepared and made available to some unrepresented parties, pro per parties, a form they could use regarding the disclosures to make it as

easy as possible for people.

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So I guess that's not a strong answer, your Honor; but we don't have a strong position on the issue.

THE COURT: Let me make the following inquiry: It's my recollection that, if this goes the way the City hopes, it will demonstrate that some percentage, I think it's 50 percent by nose count of the groundwater basin persons, like the physical solution. And two-thirds or three-quarters of the consumptive users for some period of time, I think it might have been five years, liked the solution.

And if that's demonstrated, then the City of Ventura and its fellow proponents get to turn the tables on the objectors and put the burden of proof on them.

But all this presupposes that one has decent data on who is taking what with their wells.

And does anybody already have that data or, the truth of the matter is, it's only through these disclosures that there's any chance to properly conduct this kind of census by well operators and census by consumptive users by acre feet?

MR. HAGERTY: The parties do have a significant amount of that data, but there are definitely holes. And this process would help fill those holes.

We were not strongly pushing it, but now

1 that it has been set by the court, we see a value in 2 moving forward with those initial disclosures. 3 THE COURT: Educate me as to who would have 4 any level of data about pumping behavior in years past? 5 MR. HAGERTY: So there's two groundwater 6 sustainability agencies, your Honor. And the Ojai 7 agency has been collecting data for some time. 8 State Water Resources Control Board would also have a 9 significant amount of data, and they have that data, as 10 the Court is aware, with regard to the modeling 11 exercise that they're doing. 12 So there is a lot of data out there. 13 City has some of the data. Some disclosures have 14 already been made. Some of the larger parties have 15 already filed their initial disclosures. It's 16 really --17 THE COURT: Does the good work of the Ojai 18 City agency reach the political limits of the City? 19 MR. HAGERTY: Yes, it's beyond the political 20 limits of the City. It's the Ojai basin --21 THE COURT: Functionally, is it the entirety 22 of all of these several groundwater basins or a subset? 23 MR. HAGERTY: It's a subset in that situation. 2.4 THE COURT: That's at least a partial gap in 25 the data --26 MR. SLATER: Your Honor--27 THE COURT: I'll get to you in a second. This 2.8 is the Judge talking, and I get to talk first.

2.4

So, Mr. Hagerty, does Ojai go down to everybody who has got a well and pumps a quarter or an acre foot a year or at some point they just go for what they consider the big consumption use?

MR. HAGERTY: I don't remember the cutoff for Ojai, your Honor, from the last report. But 20-acre feet a year is a requirement for the State. So everyone who is taking more than 20-acre feet a year should be and must file reports to the State.

THE COURT: But if you take 15-acre feet a year, aren't you part of the plebiscite though because you're -- to determine whether 50 percent of the takers like the idea? Even the little users are part of the plebiscite.

MR. HAGERTY: Yes. If we elect to pursue that process, yes.

That's why -- and, again, we weren't pushing for this. But now that the process has been set, we do see a value in having this information. So that would be our position, your Honor.

THE COURT: So, Mr. Hagerty, if I understand right, some of the small-takers of like 19.9-acre feet and less may not yet be part of the readily-available compilation of data and yet would be relevant to conducting a proper plebiscite?

MR. HAGERTY: Yes, your Honor.

THE COURT: What about the question of the three-quarter of two-thirds percentage of consumptive

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users, are the takes so large that these are otherwise irrelevant or is it important to get all of the 19-acre foot users on the table to know both the numerator and the denominator?

MR. HAGERTY: We believe it's good to have all of that information. Not necessarily for that specific reason, your Honor, because, again, we -- the proposing parties haven't made the election of which way we want to go. But this whole physical solution -- part of the physical solution is getting your hands around all of that information, which is why having -- with the Court having set the date, we think it's appropriate for just to go forward with it.

THE COURT: I'm going to turn to Mr. Slater in a second, but just as a parting comment to Mr. Patterson who raised the question, while I certainly don't foreclose you from seeking reasonable extension either for one or three clients or on a preliminary basis, Mr. Hagerty is providing what seems to be a plausible reason why we ought to go forward with the current game plan.

Having said that, Mr. Slater, you wanted to say something?

MR. SLATER: Yes, your Honor.

I did want to reemphasize the point that Mr. Hagerty was making. Ventura County is one of four counties in the State of California that have an express statutory obligation that pertains to any and

2.4

all, without limitation, producers of groundwater. They must file and report, under penalty of perjury, to the State every year if they use 25-acre feet, not 20, "25-acre feet." And their failure to do so is a reflection, an admission that they have no right to groundwater.

So from a materiality standpoint, we do know the more significant users in the basin. Now for the purpose your Honor was inquiring about, counting heads for purposes shifting the burden of proof, that's a separate question. And, indeed, as Mr. Hagerty represents or acknowledges, we do want that information.

But from a materiality standpoint and understanding the consequences of groundwater use on basin, we do have quite a bit of information about who is doing what.

THE COURT: Thank you.

But that also tends to confirm that, for the first of the two plebiscites, we really need to know everybody who has got even a teeny-tiny well, not to mention a big gusher of a well.

MR. SLATER: That's correct, your Honor.

THE COURT: Thank you.

Open mic, other people wish to be heard?

I'm happy to keep talking if there's something useful to talk about; but if the lawyers

don't have anything else to talk about, all I'm doing

1 is running up your legal bills for no good purpose. So 2 perhaps the most merciful thing to do is to recess. 3 Last chance, anybody got something they 4 want to take up with the court? 5 MR. PATTERSON: Your Honor, this is Gregg 6 Patterson again. 7 I just brought up the issue because of 8 the effort that may be involved. And I disagree with 9 the City's perception that everybody in this case is 10 going to be in the case after the bifurcation. 11 But I understand the issues, and I'm fine 12 with that. So I don't think there needs to be any 13 further discussion. I just brought up the question. 14 THE COURT: Okay. For State representatives, 15 is anything good happening in regard to the State 16 studies that somehow we're going to be on an expedited 17 track? 18 Is that your problem, Mr. Golden-Krasner, 19 or is it somebody else from the AG's Office? 20 MR. GOLDEN-KRASNER: Mr. Melnick can probably 21 speak to that. 22 THE COURT: Mr. Melnick, do you have any good 23 news for the Judge? 2.4 MR. MELNICK: I think, your Honor, we're 25 working on trying to expedite things so that portions 26 of what we're working on can be circulated relatively 27 quickly, your Honor. And I think I'll have -- I'm 28 fairly confident that, at the next case management

	19
1	conference, I'll be able to report what exactly we're
2	going to do and when.
3	THE COURT: Wonderful. Make it a Father's Day
4	present for me.
5	MR. MELNICK: Okay.
6	THE COURT: Okay. So, Mr. Hagerty, you're
7	going to give notice of your victory on this OSC, as
8	well as the issuance of the new OSC?
9	MR. HAGERTY: Yes, your Honor.
10	THE COURT: Hopefully, I'll get a report a
11	week in advance of the June status conference.
12	MR. HAGERTY: Yes, your Honor.
13	THE COURT: With that, you're free to go.
14	Nice talking to you.
15	MR. HAGERTY: Thank you, your Honor.
16	MR. PISANO: Thank you, your Honor.
17	(End of Proceedings)
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[& - california]

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