PROPOSED TUSCAN WATER DISTRICT

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE: The Vina and Butte sub-basins are lacking the public infrastructure and a basin-wide local agency with the necessary powers and support of groundwater dependent landowners to manage and coordinate development, enhancement and preservation of beneficial use of ground and surface water for agricultural and domestic purposes.

Members of the Agricultural Groundwater Users of Butte County (AGUBC) own or control 51,877 acres in the Vina and Butte Sub-basins. The AGUBC membership began meeting in early 2016 to discuss planning for and implementing newly imposed requirements of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA). Meetings with Butte County staff and elected officials followed, and agreed on a plan to move forward for the AGUBC to meet its interests. With the encouragement and support of Butte County, the AGUBC incorporated with the California Secretary of State as a non-profit, mutual benefit corporation, an “Agricultural Association” as a 501 (c)(6) for the specific purpose of preserving, protecting and improving the beneficial use of groundwater for groundwater dependent users in the “white area” of the Vina and Butte Sub-basins. The Board of Supervisors of Butte County memorialized in “Resolution of Support of the Agricultural Groundwater Users of Butte County”, the important role the AGUBC because of its interest and significant membership in groundwater development, planning and management in the Vina and Butte Sub-basins. Since the Resolution was adopted in 2017, the AGUBC has been continuing to meet with Butte County and to work through issues associated with Agricultural representation in the Vina Joint Powers Agency (JPA) governance structure and to design the path forward to provide for the creation of a basin-wide agency that will allow for local control. A new California Water District seemed to be the appropriate vehicle to achieve purpose and objectives of the AGUBC and Butte County.

There are three special districts, and two mutual water companies within the area of the new proposed California Water District: Rock Creek Reclamation District (RCRD), Durham Irrigation District (DID), Durham and Dayton Mutual Water Companies, and Western Canal Water District (WCWD). For a variety of reasons, none of these agencies has the ability, capacity or support of groundwater dependent landowners to move forward with the formation of a basin-wide plan and have the backing and support of Butte County. RCRD provides flood control and protection and agricultural drainage within its 4603- acre service area, and provides these services very well. Durham Irrigation provides domestic water service within the 506- acre district. Durham Mutual Water Company provides irrigation water service to 3600 acres within the corporate boundary of the Water Company, and Dayton, to 2,281 acres within its service area.

Western Canal Water District, a California Water District, provides surface water for irrigation to rice lands within the District. The District was formed in 1984 and the sphere of influence was adopted at that time or shortly thereafter. The northern portion of the Western Canal Water District sphere of influence (SOI), which consists of 17,923 acres last experienced an annexation of lands from this area over 20 years ago in 1998. Approximately 13,494 acres of AGUBC membership lands fall within the SOI area, and
AGUBC membership desires that the area be removed from the Western Canal Water District sphere of influence.

The AGUBC has requested the Board of Supervisors of Butte County to initiate proceeding to form a new California Water District for member and other unserved properties and amend the WCWD SOI as noted above.

The Tuscan Water District will contain approximately 97,113 acres much of which is prime agricultural land and held under Williamson Act Contract. These lands have been farmed or ranched by the same families for decades. Although there are a few corporate farms, much of the land is held as family agricultural land. 56,761 acres of the proposed District is contained in parcels ranging in size from 1 to 160 acres. AGUBC membership represents over 51,000 acres of the 97,000 - plus acre district, more than a majority of the land in question. The total assessed value of the District is estimated to be $562,123,441, with AGUBC land assessed value projected at $300,000,000. The annual crop report of Butte County notes the total economic value of agricultural production for FY 2017 at $696,563,214.00 for all crops. The value of agricultural production in the proposed Tuscan Water District for walnuts, almonds, rice, pistachio and prunes is approximately $291,000,000,00 or nearly 50% percent of total county-wide agricultural economy. This area not only contributes significantly to the Butte county tax base, but to overall economy directly and indirectly as well.

Essential to the long-term vitality and protection of a large value portion of the agricultural industry in the Vina and Butte sub-basin is the formation of a new California Water District, a landowner-voter, independent, special district with locally elected Directors and its own staff.

A California Water District has broad authority and powers—water purveyance, ability to assess lands, and form partnerships with other local agencies. It is the best solution for a largely un-served area to provide for local control and oversight of water management and comprehensively deal with the water issues in the Vina and Butte sub-basins because of its potential size, location and landowner representation.
Fact Check Data—Components and Data Relative to the Tuscan Water District.

Tuscan Water District total acreage 97,186
Square miles 152
AGUBC member acres 51,877
Tuscan Water District total parcels 3,135
AGUBC parcels 587
District assessed value $566,956,289.00
Butte County Unincorporated Assessed Value $3,631,747,310.00

Estimate population 6,463
Registered voters ___
Landowner-voters ___
Total agricultural acreage 80.121
Irrigated land 76,822
Non-irrigated 19,397
Prime farm land 71,558
Williamson Act Contract land 50,316
Permanent open space 2,358
Habitat 2,358
Economic value of agricultural production $290,483,000

Rock Creek Reclamation District service area 4,603a
AGUBC member acres 3,156a
Rock Creek Reclamation District sphere of influence West of Highway 99 8,112a
AGUBC member acres 4,604a

Durham Irrigation District service area 506a
AGUBC member acres 0
Durham Irrigation District sphere of influence 277a
AGUBC member acres 145a

Western Canal Water District sphere of influence 17,923a
AGUBC member acres 13,494a

Durham Mutual Water Company service area 3,598a
AGUBC member acres 915
Dayton Mutual Water Company service area 2,844a
AGUBC member acres 2,281a
Cal Water, Chico service area overlap 1.279a
AGUBC member acres 352a
CSUS “farm” and Foundation property 800a