

DWR Update on Critically Overdrafted Basins California Water Commission Meeting on August 19, 2015

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Pursuant to the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA), DWR is required to identify basins subject to critical conditions of overdraft.

Water Code Section 12924

(a) The department, in conjunction with other public agencies, shall conduct an investigation of the state's groundwater basins. The department shall identify the state's groundwater basins on the basis of geological and hydrological conditions and consideration of political boundary lines whenever practical. The department shall also investigate existing general patterns of groundwater extraction and groundwater recharge within those basins to the extent necessary to identify basins that are subject to critical conditions of overdraft.

All high and medium priority Bulletin 118 groundwater basins that DWR determines to be critically overdrafted are required to be managed under a groundwater sustainability plan or coordinated groundwater sustainability plans by January 31, 2020. [Water Code 10720.7. (a) (1)]

Ramification for basins identified as critically overdrafted -- required to submit Groundwater Sustainability Plan by January 31, 2020 (Water Code Section 10720.7)

DWR uses the term "critically overdrafted basins" to refer to "basins subject to critical conditions of overdraft" to reflect the actual status and not a potential situation.

DWR identified critically overdrafted basins in Bulletin 118-1980.

Bulletin 118 Update 2003 used same list as 1980 basins.

Developed process to identify Critically Overdrafted Basins

1. Determined Base Period (outside drought, following definition for undesirable results WC Section 10721 (w)) and used 1989-2009
 - Includes wet and dry times
 - Base period has same mean precipitation as long-term mean
2. Initial evaluation of all groundwater basins using available groundwater elevation data at DWR
3. Very limited data for many groundwater basins

Reevaluated process in light of limited data for so many basins

- Include all Bulletin 118-80 basins on original list
- Local agencies can provide data and information for DWR to evaluate

Conducted review of available reports and information to identify basins with significant and unreasonable impacts listed in SGMA

Added basins to draft list that showed evidence of overdraft with undesirable results of:

- Chronic lowering of groundwater levels
- Significant and unreasonable seawater intrusion
- Significant and unreasonable land subsidence

Basins on initial draft list included:

- All Bulletin 118-80 basins from original list (using B 118 Update 2003 basin/subbasins)
- Basins added based on review of available information

DWR staff contacted major basin managers and respective counties for the basins/subbasins identified on the preliminary list prior to public release of draft list at the CWC meeting on August 19, 2015.

- DWR gave agencies opportunity to present data for DWR to re-evaluate critically overdrafted status.
- DWR staff is still following up with a few agencies and need to schedule a meeting for at least one more area.
- Some basins/subbasins were removed from the preliminary list based on information provided to DWR.

Maps and table represent draft list of critically overdrafted basins as of August 6, 2015

- 21 basins/subbasins
- All in high or medium priority basins

Basins not identified as critically overdrafted could be overdrafted especially due to current drought conditions, but the process identified only the severely impacted basins during the base period.

Next steps:

- Present process and draft results at Public Meeting on August 25 in Clovis
- Conduct webcast on August 26
- Post draft list, maps, and information on DWR website
- Public comment period will extend for 30 days after public meeting on August 25
- Continue to accept data and information from local agencies during comment period
- Review comments and data submitted and revise list as needed
- Finalize list and post on website in October 2015
- Publish final list and information in Bulletin 118 Update (as required in WC), expected in late 2016