

May 18, 2016

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California Water Commission Approves Regulations to Guide the Sustainable Groundwater Management Plans of California Communities

SACRAMENTO – California today moved a big step closer to implementation of an historic law to protect groundwater basins from overdraft, as the [California Water Commission](#) approved regulations that will guide creation of sustainability plans by local groundwater agencies.

Approval of the regulations advances the implementation of the [Sustainable Groundwater Management Act \(SGMA\)](#), enacted by Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr. in September 2014 after more than a century of largely unregulated groundwater pumping in California. Groundwater supplies over a third of the water Californians use on average. In drought, some regions rely on groundwater for 60 percent or more of their water supplies. Unrestrained pumping in recent years has driven groundwater to lowest recorded levels in parts of the San Joaquin Valley and caused overlying land to fall, or subside, in some places. Subsidence threatens bridges, aqueducts, roads, and other infrastructure.

The Water Commission, nine appointees of the Governor, approved the SGMA regulations drafted by the Department of Water Resources (DWR) on a 9-0 vote. DWR will file the rule-making package upon approval of the Director of DWR. The approved regulations can be found [HERE](#). The Commission is charged with advising the director of DWR, approving rules and regulations, and furthering development of state policies that support integrated and sustainable water resources management.

The regulations approved today along with the Basin Boundary regulations approved by the Commission last year, will move California closer to successful implementation of SGMA and more sustainable management of our groundwater resources, one of the key elements of the [California Water Action Plan](#).

The regulations approved by the Water Commission today are the result of extensive public engagement and will guide the contents of the groundwater sustainability plans that are prepared by local groundwater sustainability agencies. The regulations cover such provisions as technical and reporting standards, sustainable management criteria, monitoring, evaluation and assessment, and plan amendments.

SGMA requires local agencies to draft plans to bring groundwater aquifers into balanced levels of pumping and recharge, which will help prepare communities for a changing climate and future droughts. High- and medium-priority groundwater basins identified as critically over-drafted must be managed under groundwater sustainability plans by January 31,

2020. All other high- and medium- priority basins must be managed under a groundwater sustainability plan by January 31, 2022, or an alternative to a plan by January 1, 2017.

For more information regarding California's groundwater please visit:

<http://www.water.ca.gov/groundwater/index.cfm>

Every Californian should take steps to conserve water; find out how at

<http://saveourwater.com/>



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