

**DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES**

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November 1, 2010

To all parties interested in the CASGEM Program:

On November 4, 2009 the State legislature amended the Water Code with SBx7-6, which mandates a statewide groundwater elevation monitoring program to track seasonal and long-term trends in groundwater elevations in California's groundwater basins. To achieve that goal, the amendment requires collaboration between local monitoring entities and Department of Water Resources (DWR) to collect groundwater elevation data. Collection and evaluation of such data on a statewide scale is an important fundamental step toward improving management of California's groundwater resources.

In accordance with this amendment to the Water Code, DWR developed the California Statewide Groundwater Elevation Monitoring (CASGEM) program. The intent of the CASGEM program is to establish a permanent, locally-managed program of regular and systematic monitoring in all of California's alluvial groundwater basins. The CASGEM program will rely and build on the many, established local long-term groundwater monitoring and management programs. DWR's role is to coordinate the CASGEM program, to work cooperatively with local entities, and to maintain the collected elevation data in a readily and widely available public database. DWR will also continue its current network of groundwater monitoring as funding allows.

The law anticipates that the monitoring of groundwater elevations required by the enacted legislation will be done by local entities. The law requires local entities to notify DWR in writing by January 1, 2011 if the local agency or party seeks to assume groundwater monitoring functions in accordance with the law.

If no local entities volunteer to monitor groundwater elevations in a basin or part of a basin, DWR may be required to develop a monitoring program for that part. If DWR takes over monitoring of a basin, certain entities in the basin may not be eligible for water grants or loans administered by the State.

In an effort to help local entities decide whether they want to volunteer to monitor groundwater elevations, DWR is providing the following two documents:

- DRAFT Procedures for Monitoring Entity Reporting for the CASGEM Program. This document summarizes the requirements of the law, explains how monitoring entities are established, and describes how data will be submitted on-line to DWR.

To all parties interested in the CASGEM Program

November 1, 2010

Page 2

- DRAFT Groundwater Elevation Monitoring Guidelines. This document describes the groundwater monitoring procedures that DWR will use if no local entity volunteers to perform CASGEM monitoring and DWR is required to conduct monitoring. These Guidelines are not binding on local entities monitoring a basin, but can provide guidance to local entities considering whether they wish to assume groundwater monitoring functions and may be helpful to determine what to include in the monitoring plans required by the law. Each basin is unique, and DWR will work with the designated monitoring entities to determine the appropriate plan for each basin.

To better carry out its role of working cooperatively with each monitoring entity to determine the manner in which groundwater elevation information should be reported to the department, DWR is providing these documents for public review. The public comment period for these documents will end on November 22, 2010, to accommodate the January 1, 2011 legislative filing deadline for local entities to notify DWR of their interest in becoming the Monitoring Entity.

The anticipated CASGEM schedule for the remainder of 2010 is as follows:

- November 1, 2010: CASGEM Draft Procedures for Monitoring Entity Reporting and DWR Draft Groundwater Elevation Monitoring Guidelines posted on CASGEM website for public review
- November 22, 2010: Public comments due on draft CASGEM documents
- December 15, 2010: Procedures for Monitoring Entity Reporting and DWR Groundwater Elevation Monitoring Guidelines finalized

DWR is developing the on-line Monitoring Entity submittal system and anticipates that the system will be accessible through the CASGEM website by mid-December. The anticipated CASGEM schedule for the 2011 to 2012 is as follows:

On or before January 1, 2011: Local entities interested in becoming the Monitoring Entity submit notification to DWR using on-line system

- After January 1, 2011: Designation of Monitoring Entities
- January 1 – July 1, 2011: Development and submittal of Monitoring Plans by designated Monitoring Entities and review by DWR
- No later than September 2011: Monitoring Entities begin groundwater monitoring
- On or before January 1, 2012: Monitoring Entities submit Fall 2011 groundwater elevation data to DWR using on-line system

To all parties interested in the CASGEM Program

November 1, 2010

Page 3

DWR appreciates the ongoing statewide interest in the CASGEM program and the public input to the process. The draft documents and access to an online system to submit comments is available on the CASGEM website at <http://www.water.ca.gov/groundwater/casgem/>. DWR looks forward to receiving your comments and working with local agencies and other interested parties on the CASGEM program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paula J. Landis". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "P".

Paula J. Landis, Chief

Division of Integrated Regional Water Management