

LOCAL GROUNDWATER ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

ELIGIBILITY

Westlands Water District is a local public agency and has the legal authority to operate within its boundaries and to enter into a grant agreement with the State of California. Since the District is a local public agency it also has the authority to adopt a Groundwater Management Plan (GWMP) and carry out the intent of the GWMP.

As defined in the California Water Code (CWC) Section 10701 (a) , “local agency” means any city, county, district, agency, or other political subdivision of the state for the local performance of governmental or proprietary functions within limited boundaries. On September 8, 1952, the Fresno County Board of Supervisors declared the District formed. Westlands formed under California Water District Law (Sections 34000-37856 of the CWC) in 1952 upon petition of landowners of 400,000 acres located within the District proposed boundaries. The current boundary of Westlands Water District is shown in Figure E-1. Sections 34000-37856 of the CWC also gives Westlands Water District the authority to enter into an agreement with the State of California.

According to the CWC Section 35850.5, “a District shall have power to join with one or more public agencies, private corporations or other persons for the purpose of carrying out any of the powers of such district, and for that purpose to contract with such other public agencies or private corporations or persons for the purpose of financing such acquisitions, constructions and operations.”

The CWC also states in Section 35851, “a district may for a valuable consideration enter into any contract with the United States, the State, or any department or agency of either, or with any distribution district or improvement district formed within its boundaries, or with any political subdivision of the State, including irrigation and reclamation districts, as the board deems proper, advisable or in the interest of the district for any one or more of the following purposes:

- (a) For the storage, regulation, control, development, and distribution of water for the irrigation of land.
- (b) For the use, control, and distribution of drainage water within the district.
- (c) For the construction, extension, operation, control, maintenance,



and management of any works or other property constructed or acquired by the district, or over which it may have control, or which may be used or useful for the irrigation or drainage of land for providing hydroelectric power.”



Figure E-1: Westlands Water District



Under the authority of AB 3030 - Groundwater Management Act, authored by Assemblyman Jim Costa, which became law on January 1, 1993, and was codified as Part 2.75, commencing with Section 10750 of Division 6 of the CWC, local agencies are able to adopt programs to manage groundwater. The Central Valley Project Improvement Act's criteria for evaluating water conservation plans require all water suppliers overlying a usable groundwater basin to initiate development of a groundwater management plan pursuant to AB 3030.

AB 3030 allows any local public agency, which provides water service to all or a portion of its service area and whose service area includes all or a portion of a groundwater basin to adopt a groundwater management plan. The law contains 12 components, which may be included in a groundwater management plan. Each component may play some role in evaluating or operating a groundwater basin so that groundwater can be managed to maximize the total water supply while protecting groundwater quality.

As stated above, Westlands Water District is defined as a local public agency as described in CWC Section 10701 (a) and was formed under California Water District Law, Sections 34000-37856 of the CWC. Within the CWC, Section 35850.5 and 35851 state that the District has the legal authority to enter into a grant agreement with the State of California. Under the Groundwater Management Act, the District also has the authority to develop, adopt and carry out the intent of a GWMP. Westlands Water District is fully eligible to apply for the Local Groundwater Assistance Program.