

May 18, 2016

Contact:

Chris Orrock, Information Officer

(916) 651-7012 chris.orrock@water.ca.gov

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/>



###

STATE OF CALIFORNIA
CALIFORNIA NATURAL RESOURCES AGENCY
CALIFORNIA WATER COMMISSION

RESOLUTION NUMBER: 2016-01

RESOLUTION TO APPROVE EMERGENCY REGULATIONS FOR GROUNDWATER
SUSTAINABILITY PLANS AND ALTERNATIVES UNDER THE SUSTAINABLE
GROUNDWATER MANAGEMENT ACT

WHEREAS, on September 16, 2014, Governor Brown signed into law the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA), which provides a framework for long-term, sustainable groundwater management throughout California; and

WHEREAS, SGMA provides the following:

- a. Requires critically-overdrafted high and medium priority basins to be managed under a Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) by January 31, 2020 as described in Water Code section 10720.7;
- b. Requires all other groundwater basins designated as high or medium priority basins to be managed under a GSP by January 31, 2022 as described in Water Code section 10720.7;
- c. Gives Groundwater Sustainability Agencies the financial and enforcement authority to carry out effective local sustainable groundwater management, as described in Water Code sections 10730 and 10732; and
- d. Provides an opportunity for local agencies to submit Alternatives to GSPs by January 1, 2017 as described in Water Code section 10733.6; and

WHEREAS, in addition to other responsibilities under SGMA, Water Code section 10733.2 directs the Department, by June 1, 2016, to adopt emergency regulations that:

- a. Identify the necessary plan components required by Water Code sections 10727.2, 10727.4, and 10727.6 and other information that will assist local agencies in developing and implementing groundwater sustainability plans and coordination agreements;
- b. Identify appropriate methodologies and assumptions for baseline conditions concerning hydrology, water demand, regulatory restrictions that affect the availability of surface water, and unreliability of, or reductions in, surface water deliveries to the agency or water users in the basin, and the impact of those conditions on achieving sustainability; and
- c. Evaluate alternatives submitted pursuant to Water Code section 10733.6; and

WHEREAS, Water Code section 10733.2 also provides that adoption of these regulations is an emergency and shall be considered by the Office of Administrative Law as necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health and safety, or general welfare; and

WHEREAS, Water Code section 161 authorizes the California Water Commission to approve rules and regulations of the Department; and

WHEREAS, after conducting significant public outreach, the Department developed regulations that implement Water Code section 10733.2 (GSP Regulations), and on February 18, 2016, the Department published the draft GSP Regulations on its Internet website; and

WHEREAS, the Department conducted three public meetings to consider public comments as follows: March 21, 2016 in Visalia, March 22, 2016 in Santa Ana, and March 25, 2016 in Sacramento. The Department accepted written public comments on the GSP Regulations through April 1, 2016; and

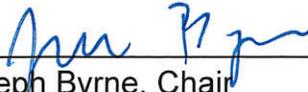
WHEREAS, after reviewing written comments and comments received at the public meetings and at California Water Commission meetings, the Department revised the draft GSP Regulations and the revised GSP Regulations are hereby presented to the California Water Commission for consideration and approval; and

WHEREAS, The adoption of the GSP Regulations is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) because adoption of these regulations is not a project under CEQA, and, even assuming that adoption of these regulations constitutes a project, it would be exempt because there is no possibility that the adoption of the GSP Regulations will have a significant effect on the environment. (Pub. Res. Code §21065, 14 CCR §§ 15061, 15378.)

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the California Water Commission:

Approves the GSP Regulations at their meeting on May 18, 2016.

Signed:



Joseph Byrne, Chair
California Water Commission

5-18-16

Date

Attest:



Paula J. Landis, Executive Officer
California Water Commission



Date