



## Sustainable Groundwater Management Act Overview

In September 2014, the California Legislature passed the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA). SGMA provides a framework for sustainable management of groundwater resources by local authorities and includes certain requirements of local agencies managing groundwater basins or subbasins that the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) designates as medium priority or high priority. SGMA does not change existing surface water and groundwater rights and does not impact current drought response measures. For those basins designated as medium or high priority, SGMA generally requires the formation of a Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) and the adoption of a Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP).

SGMA also created new requirements for DWR and the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB). DWR leads state efforts to support the development of GSPs, through technical assistance and other means, and is charged with developing regulations for GSP content. DWR is also responsible for reviewing GSPs submitted by GSAs for consistency with the GSP Regulations. SGMA additionally authorizes the SWRCB to serve as a 'backstop' for local control and sets specific criteria for SWRCB involvement in SGMA implementation, including issuing SWRCB-developed GSPs and requiring management actions in basins where DWR finds that GSAs are not likely to achieve the objectives of SGMA.

Previously under the California Statewide Groundwater Elevation Monitoring Program<sup>1</sup> (CASGEM), DWR classified California's groundwater basins and subbasins as either high, medium, low, or very low priority. The CASGEM priority classifications were made based on eight criteria that include the overlying population, the reliance on groundwater, and the number of wells in a basin or subbasin.

In January 2019, DWR completed its evaluation and re-prioritization of all of the groundwater basins across California. The Napa Valley Subbasin was reprioritized from a medium to a high priority ranking due primarily to revised projections of future population for the Subbasin, an increased assessment of the total number of wells, and a revised approach to evaluating water quality in the Subbasin. The change from a medium to a high priority does not affect current requirements for the Napa Valley Subbasin under SGMA. In November 2019, DWR commended the County for proactively managing groundwater resources.<sup>2</sup> Basins classified as very low or low priority are not subject to SGMA. The three other basins/subbasins located largely in Napa County are very low priority.

SGMA set two due dates for GSPs, which is January 31, 2022 for the Napa Valley Subbasin. SGMA provides a 20-year timeline for GSAs to implement actions that achieve long-term groundwater sustainability. GSAs are required to update their GSPs every 5-years following submittal and demonstrate consistent progress towards achieving sustainability within the 20-year period.

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<sup>1</sup> CASGEM is the California Statewide Groundwater Elevation Monitoring program implemented under Water Code Part 2.11 Groundwater Monitoring and administered by DWR.

<sup>2</sup> <https://tinyurl.com/11NOV2019-DWR-Letter>