

## PARTICIPATION OPPORTUNITIES

Each water user has unique perspectives, priorities, constraints, and resources related to groundwater. This creates both challenges and opportunities when defining and quantifying sustainability.

For this reason, community participation is important to ensure that what is being proposed is protective of your interests and inclusive of community priorities. In other words, that any new projects and management actions prioritize access to safe water and equitable supply and are protective of domestic wells and small water systems.

### Get Involved and Help Your GSA

- Understand the groundwater challenges affecting rural communities and domestic wells owners.
- Identify and develop projects that improve groundwater conditions in your community.
- Identify ways to keep SGMA fees affordable.

### How to Get Involved

- Contact your GSA and register as an interested party to receive notices of meetings and important information.
- Attend meetings of the GSA board and/or committee. Provide public comment/recommendations or ask questions about their work.
- Apply to serve on a committee or GSA Board.

## HOW CAN THE NEW LAW AFFECT YOU?

GSA's are making important decisions regarding the future and striving level for groundwater levels and groundwater quality across your region. Agencies have the authority to decide:

- **How much more groundwater level can continue to drop?**
- **How many wells can go dry?**
- **How to address groundwater quality?**
- **How many wells can be at risk of groundwater contamination?**
- **What type of measurements should be implemented to prevent or mitigate impacts to drinking water wells?**
- **What type of projects and management actions should be implemented to solve the groundwater problems?**
- **Should groundwater extraction be charged?**
- **How groundwater will be allocated among the different water users?**

## CONTACT

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# SUSTAINABLE GROUNDWATER MANAGEMENT ACT (SGMA)



**The Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA)** is a new law that will fundamentally change the way we use and manage groundwater in California.

### What you will find in this flyer:

- What is the new SGMA regulation?
- How will SGMA affect me and my community?
- How can I get involved?

Supporting rural communities across the San Joaquin Valley to achieve sustainable water management.



**Self-Help  
Enterprises**



### What is groundwater?

Groundwater is the water found underground.

### Why is groundwater important?

Groundwater is a critical resource that gives life and sustain the viability of the region's economy as well as the viability of our communities, cities, and industries.

### What are the challenges we face?

In many areas of the State, groundwater pumping exceeds the amount that is replenished over time. This is commonly known as overdraft. Overdraft has caused many problems, including:

- Declining groundwater levels which causes wells to dry and higher pumping costs as the water is pumped from deeper wells.
- Degradation of groundwater quality which affects many small drinking water systems and households relying on domestic wells
- Sinking land, also known as subsidence, that causes damage on infrastructure.



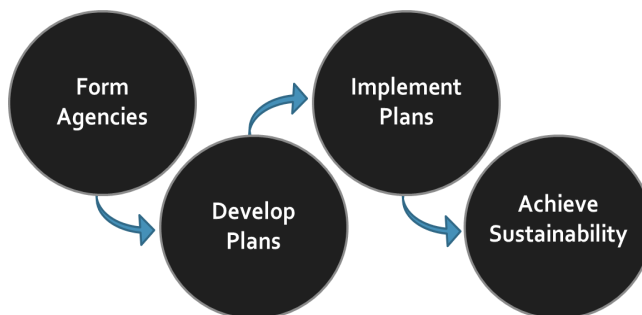
### What is the new SGMA regulation?

SGMA is a new law that requires that areas with known groundwater challenges be managed to ensure groundwater is a reliable source that is available long term. Most of the San Joaquin Valley fits this description and are required to comply with SGMA.

The intended principle of SGMA is **“Groundwater is best managed at the local level.”**

### Areas subject to the Act must:

- 1) Form Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs) to manage and regulate groundwater. Once formed, these GSAs will have new powers, including the ability to limit or suspend groundwater pumping and charge fees for groundwater extraction.
- 2) All GSAs must develop Groundwater Sustainability Plans (GSPs). GSPs will need to document the groundwater conditions in the area; establish goals to prevent negative impacts (also known as undesirable results); and identify projects and management actions that improve groundwater conditions.
- 3) GSAs will have 20 years to implement the GSP and achieve sustainability.



### What is SGMA seeking to prevent?

SGMA requires GSAs to prevent undesirable results that are significant and unreasonable. There are 6 undesirable results:



Lowering of Groundwater Levels



Reduction of Groundwater Storage



Degraded Groundwater Quality



Seawater Intrusion



Land Subsidence



Surface Water Depletion

### How will Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs) solve the problems?

SGMA granted broad powers to GSAs, authorizing them to *'perform any act necessary or proper to carry out the purposes of SGMA'*.

To solve the groundwater problems, GSAs can impose different types of strategies, such as: water fees, pumping limits, require meters on wells, develop and implement projects to increase water supply like recharge projects.

GSAs may also decide to develop measurements to mitigate impacts or create specific protection around drinking water systems. Mitigation measurements may include providing technical assistance to investigate well problems, cost support to lower well pumps or even constructing deeper wells.