

Sustainable Groundwater Management Act

In 2014, landmark water legislation establishing the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) was signed into law. The SGMA includes provisions related to the establishment of Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSA) and the adoption of Groundwater Sustainability Plans (GSP) to sustainably manage groundwater resources. Together, counties and water agencies are being given the authority to manage their underlying basins locally. To avoid the State's intervention, local agencies must meet a number of SGMA deadlines and benchmarks, including:

- By June 30, 2017, a local agency/agencies in each high or medium priority groundwater basin(s) must have officially formed one or more GSAs for the entire basin;
- By January 31, 2020, each high or medium priority groundwater basin that is subject to critical conditions of overdraft must be managed under a GSP;
- By January 31, 2022, all remaining high or medium priority groundwater basins must be managed under a GSP; and,
- Final review by the Department of Water Resources by January 31, 2024.

Should local agencies elect to not meet the deadlines below, the State will effectively come into the area and "take charge" of managing the basin in question.