

APPENDIX B

Tehama GSA – SWRCB Intervention and Fee Policy



Reporting and Fees

Tulare Lake Subbasin Groundwater Extraction Reporting Suspended

Have you received a letter titled “**Notice of Groundwater Extraction Reporting Required Under the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA)**” for the Tulare Lake Subbasin? Visit the [Tulare Lake Subbasin webpage](#) to learn about the temporary suspension of groundwater reporting requirements in the Tulare Lake Subbasin.

The Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) requires people who extract or pump groundwater in high- or medium-priority basins not managed by groundwater sustainability agencies (unmanaged areas) or those who are in probationary basins to file groundwater extraction reports with the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) and pay extraction fees. For more information on the levels of state intervention, including unmanaged areas and probationary basins please visit the [SGMA State Intervention website](#). The [Groundwater Basins website](#) provides information on basins that are subject to state intervention.

The information on this page will assist you in better determining if you are required to report your groundwater extractions annually to the State Water Board, and if so, what filing fees would apply. Any person who extracts or pumps groundwater from an unmanaged area or probationary basin must file a groundwater extraction report with the State Water Board each year.

Please see our [fee regulations](#) for more information. If you have any questions, please contact us at the contact information below.



Artesian well, Kern County, circa 1890

Other SGMA Links

[SGMA Home](#) | [What is SGMA?](#) | [What is State Intervention?](#) | [Groundwater Basins](#) | [Reporting and Fees](#) | [More Information and Resources](#) | [Public Meetings and Participation](#)

? Reporting and Fees FAQs and Resources

[Groundwater Extraction Reporting Frequently Asked Questions](#) ▶

[Groundwater Extraction Fees Frequently Asked Questions](#) ▶

Other Resources

- [Example of Notification of Reporting Requirements Letter](#)
- [State Water Board's Options for Measuring Extraction Volumes](#) | [Opciones para medir los volúmenes de extracción de aguas subterráneas](#)

[Groundwater Extraction Annual Reporting System \(GEARS\)](#)

Extraction Annual Reporting System (GEARS). Please refer to the Groundwater Extraction Reporting Frequently Asked Questions above for additional information on groundwater extraction reporting.

Tutorial videos for GEARS are available for:

- [Registering for a GEARS account](#)
- [Plotting and describing your well\(s\) and extracted groundwater use in GEARS](#)
- [Submitting your groundwater extraction report in GEARS](#)



Extraction Reporting System

Groundwater Extraction Fees

If you are required to file an annual groundwater extraction report with the State Water Board, you will also likely be required to pay extraction fees. The State Water Board is required to charge extraction fees to recover the cost of state intervention activities in groundwater basins. The following table

specific reporting and fees information.

Fee Category	Fee Amount	Applicable Parties
Annual Base Filing Fee	\$300 per well	All extractors required to report (excludes de minimis extractors).
Unmanaged Area Rate	\$10 per acre-foot (AF) (metered) \$25 per AF (unmetered)	Extractors in unmanaged areas (excludes de minimis extractors).
Volumetric Rate	\$20 per AF	Extractors in probationary basins (excludes de minimis extractors).
Interim Plan Rate	\$55 per AF	Extractors in probationary basins where the State Water Board determines an interim plan is required (excludes de minimis extractors).
De minimis Fee	\$100 per well	De minimis extractors in probationary basins (only required if the State Water Board determines at a public hearing that de minimis pumpers must report extractions and pay fees).
Automatic Late Fee	25% per month	Extractors that do not file reports by the due date.

AF = acre-foot

An acre-foot is enough water to cover one acre of land with one foot of water.



Contact Us

If you have questions, please contact us at 916-322-6508 or email at SGMA@waterboards.ca.gov.

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Join the Mailing List

To receive updates on SGMA related fees and reporting, subscribe to the SGMA Groundwater Management email list.






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- [Wastewater Arrearage Payment](#)
- [Website Index](#)

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- [Abbreviations and Acronyms](#)
- [Board Priorities](#)
- [Decisions Pending &](#)
- [Opportunities for Public Participation](#)
- [Employment](#)
- [Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- [Grants & Loans](#)
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[Back to Top](#)

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What is State Intervention?

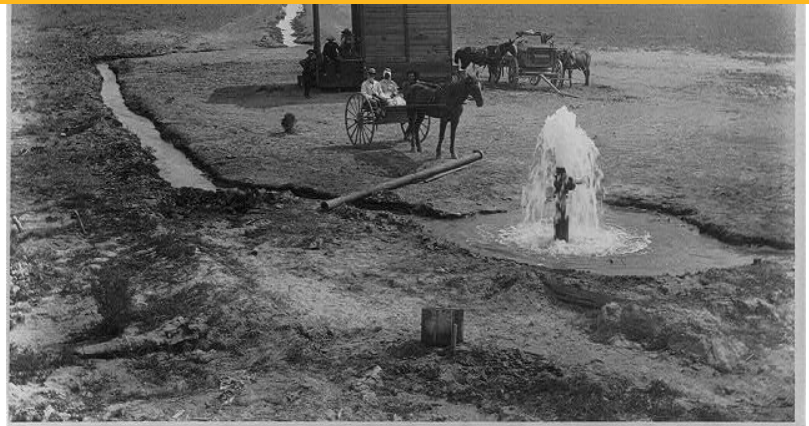
The Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) recognizes that groundwater management is generally most effective at the local level. SGMA requires local agencies in [high- or medium-priority basins](#), as designated by the California Department of Water Resources (DWR), to form Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs). The GSAs, made up of one or more local agencies overlying a groundwater basin, are required to develop and implement Groundwater Sustainability Plans (GSPs) that outline how long-term sustainable management of their basins will be achieved within 20 years of implementation of the plans.

Other SGMA Links

[SGMA Home](#) | [What is SGMA?](#) | [What is State Intervention?](#) | [Groundwater Basins](#) | [Reporting and Fees](#) | [More Information and Resources](#) | [Public Meetings and Participation](#)

To ensure groundwater resources are sustainably managed, SGMA gives the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) authority to protect groundwater resources through a process called “state intervention” when local agencies are unable or unwilling to sustainably manage their groundwater basins. State intervention is additional to local management and is intended to be temporary: lasting only until local agencies demonstrate that they are ready to adequately manage their respective basins.

The two lead state agencies in SGMA implementation are DWR, which is a state department in the California Natural Resources Agency, and the State Water Resources Control Board, which is an independent board within the California Environmental Protection Agency. DWR provides regulatory oversight by assessing and evaluating Groundwater Sustainability Plans (GSPs). The Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs) are required to submit their GSPs to DWR. If during the GSP assessment and evaluation process, DWR determines that the plan is inadequate (fails the plan) in a basin, state intervention by the State Water Board is triggered.



Artesian well with horse-drawn cart, Kern County, circa 1880

State intervention is a process that could result in the State Water Board temporarily managing and protecting groundwater resources until local agencies are able and willing to do so adequately. There are several steps to the intervention process. An overview is provided below.

State Intervention Resources

- [Groundwater, the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act, and State Intervention \(2023\)](#)
- [Aguas subterráneas, Ley de Gestión Sostenible de Aguas Subterráneas e intervención estatal \(2023\)](#)

State intervention is triggered by one of the following events:

Effective Date	Triggering Event
July 1, 2017	Entire basin is not covered by a GSA(s) or an alternative to a GSP
Jan 31, 2020	Basin is in critical overdraft and there is no plan or DWR fails GSP
Jan 31, 2022	No plan in the basin or DWR fails GSP or GSP implementation AND basin is in long-term overdraft
Jan 31, 2025	DWR fails GSP or GSP implementation AND basin has significant surface water depletions (if no long-term overdraft)

Note: DWR = Department of Water Resources. GSA = Local Groundwater Sustainability Agency. GSP = Groundwater Sustainability Plan

resubmitted, DWR then reviews the GSP(s) again and, if the deficiencies still are not cured, DWR will find the GSP(s) inadequate and intervention by the State Water Board is triggered.

State Intervention Process Overview

After state intervention is triggered in a groundwater basin, the next step is for the State Water Board to consider making a probationary determination of the basin. This is done using a public process that includes a public hearing. If the State Water Board designates a basin as “probationary,” a term used in the SGMA law, during the probationary period, GSAs have time to address the issues (deficiencies) that caused the basin to go into probation.

During the probationary period, the State Water Board will focus on data collection and analysis to better understand what management challenges are occurring in the basin. To acquire the necessary data, the State Water Board can require extractors install meters so extractors can measure and report their groundwater extractions accurately, or the State Water Board can specify other means for measuring and reporting groundwater extractions.

For basins on probation, SGMA requires that well owners file online annual groundwater extraction reports (most small domestic well owners will likely be exempt). The State Water Board will notify well owners and landowners of their extraction reporting requirements and associated filing fees. Fees are required because [Water Code section 1529.5](#) directs the State Water Board to recover the costs of state intervention activities. For more information on groundwater extraction reporting and filing fees, visit the [Reporting and Fees](#) webpage and the State Water Board's [SGMA fee regulations](#).

If the issues that caused the basin to be deemed probationary are not addressed during the probationary period, the State Water Board may begin another public process to determine whether or not to develop and implement an interim plan for the basin. Importantly, an interim plan cannot be implemented until the GSAs in a probationary basin are allowed at least one year to correct their deficiencies. If the State Water Board adopts an interim plan, the Board would temporarily manage groundwater in the basin until the local agencies could demonstrate their ability to manage the basin sustainably and resume management.

Visit the [Probationary Designation and Groundwater Regulation by the State Water Board](#) (PDF) fact sheet for more information.

Levels of State Intervention

- **Umanaged Area**

An [unmanaged area](#) is a part of a groundwater basin that was not within the management area of a GSA by July 1, 2017, or became unmanaged after that date when a GSA withdrew. A well owner that

information on groundwater extraction reporting and tiling fees, visit [Reporting and Fees](#) website.

- **Probationary Basin**

If local agencies fail to form a GSA, fail to develop an adequate GSP, or fail to implement the plan successfully in a groundwater basin, the State Water Board may designate the entire basin probationary after providing notice and holding a public hearing. A probationary designation will identify the deficiencies that led to state intervention and potential actions to remedy the deficiencies. Any well owner who extracts or pumps groundwater from a probationary basin must file an annual [groundwater extraction report](#) with the State Water Board unless the State Water Board decides to exclude certain types of groundwater extractions. The State Water Board may require the use of a meter to measure groundwater extractions and the reporting of additional information. Groundwater users who pump two acre-feet or less per year for their own domestic use (i.e., indoor and outdoor residential use) may be exempt from reporting in probationary basins, but this will be determined for each individual basin at a State Water Board public hearing. The SGMA law calls such small domestic well owners “de minimis” users. However, the State Water Board can require reporting by de minimis users in probationary basins if collectively they make up a significant amount of the groundwater pumping and their reporting is necessary to sustainably manage the basin. Landowners will be notified by the State Water Board of the requirement to report extractions annually. For information about groundwater basins under state intervention and actions taken by the State Water Board visit [Groundwater Basins](#).

- **Interim Plan**

An interim plan is intended to be a temporary measure to protect groundwater until effective local management is in place. The State Water Board will allow local agencies a limited amount of time to fix the deficiencies in their basin that led to a probationary designation before developing an interim plan to manage groundwater. An interim plan will contain corrective actions, a timeline, and a monitoring plan to ensure corrective actions are working. The State Water Board will adopt the interim plan through a public hearing process, similar to the probationary designation public process.

Ending State Intervention

To end State Water Board management of a groundwater basin, GSAs in that basin will have to demonstrate to the State Water Board (in consultation with DWR) their ability and willingness to manage groundwater sustainably and address the issues that caused state intervention to occur. This may require changes to the GSPs, revision of coordination agreements among the GSAs, pumping restrictions, or other measures to provide assurances that ongoing local management will be effective.

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[Website Index](#)

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[Abbreviations and Acronyms](#)

[Board Priorities](#)

[Decisions Pending &](#)

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Options for Measuring Extraction Volumes

BACKGROUND

The Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) requires extractors in unmanaged areas or probationary basins to file groundwater extraction reports with the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board). Extraction reports must include monthly extraction volumes for the preceding water year. SGMA requires that extraction volumes be measured by a device or method satisfactory to the State Water Board.¹

This document provides options for measuring extraction volumes. The first section describes measurement methods. For details on report requirements, unmanaged areas, and probationary basins, visit the [State Intervention webpage \(https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/sigma/intervention.html\)](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/sigma/intervention.html).

OPTIONS FOR MEASURING EXTRACTION VOLUMES

The State Water Board has identified two approaches that have reasonable accuracy for measuring extraction volumes. Other possible approaches are discussed on the next page.

- 1) **Totalizing flowmeter.** A totalizing flowmeter is permanently attached to the well and tracks the cumulative volume of water extracted from a well, similar to the odometer in a car.
- 2) **Run time method.** For wells without a totalizing flowmeter, extraction volumes may be estimated with the following equation:

Extraction volume = Run time × Flow rate

Run time is the amount of time the well pump is on.

Flow rate is the amount of water produced by the well over a period of time, such as gallons per minute (GPM) or cubic feet per second (CFS).

The State Water Board has identified two ways to determine the ***run time*** of a pump:

- **Hour meter.** An hour meter (also known as a pump run time meter) is permanently attached to the pump motor and tracks the cumulative amount of time the pump is running, similar to a car's odometer.

¹ Water Code Section 5203 et. seq.

- **Manual record.** For wells that are not equipped with an hour meter, the extractor can keep a written record of the time the pump switched on and off.

The State Water Board has identified three ways to determine the **flow rate** of a well:

- **Flowmeter.** A flowmeter can track the flow rate of a well, similar to a car's speedometer.
- **Pump efficiency test.** A pump efficiency test measures various aspects of a pump's operation, including flow rate. Pump tests may be available from pump dealers, public utilities, or independent companies. Often, a pump test is conducted when the pump is first installed.
- **Pump curve.** If a flowmeter is not installed and recent pump test data are not available, flow rate can be estimated with a pump curve from the manufacturer and the pump lift of the well.

Because a well's flow rate can fluctuate throughout the water year, the State Water Board recommends that extractors measure flow rate periodically and use the most representative flow rate value for each month when estimating monthly extraction volumes.

OTHER APPROACHES

There may be other approaches for measuring or estimating extraction volumes. If an extractor chooses to use a different approach, the device or method must be satisfactory to the State Water Board pursuant to Water Code Section 5203(e). The State Water Board will evaluate each approach on a case-by-case basis.

When selecting an approach, extractors need to ensure the approach is measuring or estimating the actual volume of water extracted from the well. This includes water losses, such as deep percolation, offsite surface runoff, conveyance leakage between the well and the place of use, etc. Extractors also need to consider the accuracy of the chosen approach, because approaches with low accuracy may not be acceptable. For example, the Board did not identify power consumption techniques as methods to measure extraction volumes, because applying average pump efficiency and energy consumption values to individual pumps typically produces inaccurate estimates of the volume of water extracted from the well.²

² Burt, C.M. 2017. Using Electricity Consumption to Estimate Water Volumes Pumped from Wells. ITRC Paper No. P 17-001. Prepared for the Department of Water Resources Office of Water Conservation. <http://www.itrc.org/papers/pdf/wellrecords.pdf>.

It is the responsibility of the extractor to provide adequate explanation and documentation of the chosen approach in the groundwater extraction report and maintain adequate measurement records. Inadequate explanations, documentation, or records may not be acceptable to the State Water Board.

CONTACT US

For more information or if you have questions, please contact the State Water Board's Groundwater Management Program.

Phone: 916-322-6508
Email: SGMA@waterboards.ca.gov
Website: <https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/sgma/>

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