

Opportunities for Participation

Domestic well users have the opportunity to participate in the establishment of a GSA and development of the GSA's sustainability plan.

Before deciding to become a GSA, the local agency must hold a public hearing. Prior to developing a sustainability plan, the GSA must make available a written statement that describes the manner in which interested parties may participate in the development and implementation of the sustainability plan.

GSAs are required to encourage active participation by a diverse range of stakeholders in the groundwater basin; maintain lists of interested parties; and engage those parties in the development and implementation of the sustainability plan. Adoption or amendment of a sustainability plan may only occur after a public hearing.

Additional Information

Information on GSA development, including guidelines, GSA notifications, and the Department of Water Resources' role in GSA formation is available online at www.water.ca.gov/groundwater/sgm/gsa.cfm

The mapping features, notifications, and tables available on this website will be helpful in determining whether a GSA has formed in your area. You can use the information to contact your local GSA and ensure that you are listed as an interested party.

In areas where no GSA has submitted a formation notification, you may wish to contact local public agencies with existing land or water use authorities to see if they are working towards forming a GSA.



March 2016



Domestic Well Users
and the

Sustainable Groundwater
Management Act (SGMA)

Domestic Well Users and the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA)

Domestic well users generally fall within the SGMA definition of a de minimis extractor. SGMA defines a de minimis extractor as “a person who extracts, for domestic purposes, two acre-feet or less (of groundwater) per year.”

Most private users of domestic wells use less than two acre-feet of water per year (an acre-foot is enough water to cover one acre of land with one foot of water; and is typically enough water to supply a family of five for an entire year). If your house relies on a single domestic well and you are not watering crops or large areas of landscape, it is likely that you are a de minimis extractor.

SGMA may affect domestic well users under certain circumstances, as described in this brochure.



Management by a Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA)

Each GSA will determine the management policies that will apply to domestic well users under a groundwater sustainability plan. One GSA may choose to exempt domestic well users from management altogether, while another GSA may need to incorporate domestic well users into basin management in order to address negative effects caused by groundwater extractions in the basin.

Powers and Authorities

SGMA describes GSA powers and authorities, which include the authority to charge fees, conduct investigations, register wells, require reporting, and take other actions to sustainably manage the basin.

Metering

SGMA does not authorize GSAs to require domestic well users to meter their wells.

Domestic Well User Interests

GSAs must consider the interests of domestic well users. SGMA requires each GSA to provide an explanation of how it will consider the interests of domestic well users as part of the GSA notification process that must be submitted to the Department of Water Resources.

Participating in a GSA

GSAs are also required to establish a list of parties interested in receiving notices on plan preparation, meeting announcements, draft plans, and other related activities. You can stay involved with your local GSA by making a request to the GSA, in writing, to be placed on the “interested persons list.”

Information on GSA development and a GSA notification map are available at www.water.ca.gov/groundwater/sgm/gsa_map.cfm.



Monitoring and Reporting

Local Management

Domestic well users may be required to report groundwater information to a local GSA as part of a sustainability plan. In this situation, domestic well users will report directly to the GSA, not the state. The GSA will establish the required level of reporting detail.

State Intervention

Domestic well users are not automatically exempt from management by state intervention. The State Water Resources Control Board may place requirements or restrictions on domestic well users in a basin that has been designated probationary. If domestic well extractions are likely to have a substantial impact on the basin, domestic well users may be required to report individual well locations and extraction information directly to the State Water Resources Control Board.

Information on state intervention and probationary basin designation is available at www.waterboards.ca.gov/gmp.