



GROUNDWATER MANAGEMENT

ACWA POLICY PRINCIPLES

PREAMBLE

Groundwater is an invaluable resource for California and provides an estimated 38 to 46 percent of the State's total water supply. In 2014, then-Governor Jerry Brown signed into law a three-bill legislative package collectively known as the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA). The enactment of SGMA established a statewide regulatory framework for the sustainable management of groundwater basins for the first time in California history. ACWA is committed to working with the State and with urban and agricultural water users, growers and landowners, environmental and disadvantaged community interests, and other stakeholders on achieving groundwater sustainability in California. Implementation of SGMA and other groundwater management goals should be done in a manner consistent with the following policy principles adopted by ACWA's Board of Directors.

GROUNDWATER MANAGEMENT POLICY PRINCIPLES

1. Enhance local management of groundwater:

ACWA supports the SGMA objective to enhance local management of groundwater. ACWA opposes State interference with existing legal rights to groundwater and surface water and believes that a State-administered water rights system for groundwater would undermine effective groundwater management and local investments.

2. Continue progress on SGMA implementation:

ACWA supports groundwater management in accordance with SGMA as currently written, with an emphasis on continued local control and an adherence to statutory deadlines. It is imperative that the processes identified in SGMA, such as the timeline to achieve sustainability, be acknowledged and maintained for the successful implementation of statewide sustainable groundwater management. SGMA enforcement should be based on the statute and regulations and should not be used to enforce peripheral issues. Progress in groundwater management should be recognized.

3. Increase funding: SGMA implementation will require significant federal, state, regional, local and private investment in infrastructure and related facilities. ACWA supports increased funding for groundwater projects, research, monitoring and other programs.

4. Support regional planning and solutions: ACWA encourages and supports regional groundwater management strategies such as those that can be obtained through Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) plans and other regional partnerships.

- 5. Expand conjunctive management:** ACWA supports expanding conjunctive management of surface water and groundwater supplies that contributes to the protection, reliability and sustainability of local, regional and statewide water supplies for water users and the environment. Such an expansion requires: (1) increased groundwater and surface storage, (2) state support to advance and implement new tools (such as Forecast-Informed Reservoir Operations) that will enable more efficient operation and adaptive management of reservoirs, and (3) capture and storage of stormwater runoff.
- 6. Manage groundwater quality:** Management of groundwater quality is integral to optimizing California's groundwater resources and requires monitoring, data management, basin assessments, reporting, protection and, where appropriate, remediation.
- 7. Promote groundwater replenishment:** ACWA supports use of potable, desalinated, recycled, flood and storm waters for groundwater recharge, with appropriate water quality safeguards to protect beneficial uses. ACWA supports streamlining temporary State Water Resources Control Board water rights permits for groundwater recharge.
- 8. Coordinate groundwater management and land use policies:** Land use policies and regulations must identify, preserve and protect natural and artificial recharge and extraction capabilities, which are important for sustainable groundwater management. Land use policies must take into account impacts to groundwater resources and must also be protective of groundwater quality.
- 9. Streamline State programs:** As State programs and local obligations to meet existing and new regulations become more challenging, ACWA strongly encourages the State to streamline existing programs.
- 10. Adapt to climate change:** ACWA supports reasonable groundwater management strategies that anticipate and adapt to the effects of climate change, provided adaptation strategies are clearly defensible and flexible and do not affect existing water rights.
- 11. Increase groundwater education and awareness:** ACWA encourages increased education, communication, and awareness regarding groundwater management that targets diverse interests that depend on sustainable groundwater resources.

