

**STATE WATER RESOURCES CONTROL BOARD
RESOLUTION NO. 2026-0010**

RETURNING THE DELTA-MENDOTA GROUNDWATER SUBBASIN TO THE
DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES CONSISTENT WITH THE SUSTAINABLE
GROUNDWATER MANAGEMENT ACT

WHEREAS:

1. Groundwater provides a significant portion of California's water supply, making up more than one-half of the water used by Californians in drought years when other sources are unavailable. When properly managed, groundwater resources provide for communities, farms, and the environment and help protect against prolonged dry periods and climate change, preserving water supplies for existing and potential beneficial uses. However, excessive groundwater extraction can cause long-term overdraft, failed wells, deteriorated water quality, environmental damage, and irreversible land subsidence that damages infrastructure and diminishes the capacity of aquifers to store water for the future, all of which can have substantial economic impacts. Additionally, failure to manage groundwater to prevent long-term overdraft can potentially infringe on rights to or use of groundwater or interconnected surface water.
2. In 2014, the State of California enacted Assembly Bill 1739 and Senate Bills 1168 and 1319, collectively referred to as the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA). SGMA is intended to ensure the proper and sustainable management of groundwater resources in California.
3. The State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board or Board) recognizes that near-term SGMA implementation has the potential to result in substantial economic impacts in overdrafted basins. The State Water Board further recognizes that the goal of SGMA is sustainable groundwater management that will ensure the long-term viability of groundwater resources for future use by communities, farms, businesses, and the environment.
4. SGMA allows local agencies overlying alluvial groundwater basins to form Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs), and in basins determined by the Department of Water Resources to be high- or medium-priority, requires each GSA to prepare and implement a Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) to achieve sustainable management of the basin.
5. SGMA recognizes that groundwater management is best accomplished locally; however, if local agencies fail to form a GSA or prepare a GSP for a

groundwater basin, or the Department of Water Resources determines that the GSP is inadequate or not being implemented in a way that is likely to achieve SGMA's sustainability goal, SGMA authorizes the State Water Board to intervene in the basin to ensure that the basin is managed sustainably.

6. SGMA requires GSAs, whose projects and management actions can have broad impacts within their basins, to consider the interests of all beneficial uses and users of groundwater and to encourage the active involvement of diverse elements of the population of a groundwater basin during the development and implementation of GSPs.
7. The State Water Board may designate a basin as probationary as part of SGMA's state intervention process. If the State Water Board designates a basin as probationary, it must identify the deficiencies in the GSP, identify potential actions to remedy the deficiencies, and exclude from probationary status any portion of a basin for which a GSA demonstrates compliance with SGMA's sustainability goal, and may exclude a class or category of extractions if those extractions are adequately managed under an applicable plan or program or are likely to have a minimal impact on basin withdrawals from the reporting and fee requirement that applies to probationary basins under Water Code section 5202.
8. The deadline for GSAs in critically overdrafted high- and medium-priority basins to adopt and submit GSPs for review by the Department of Water Resources was January 31, 2020.
9. The Delta-Mendota Subbasin is depicted in Figure 1 of the [Delta-Mendota Subbasin Staff Assessment](#) (Staff Assessment) and is a critically overdrafted high-priority basin.
10. The Aliso Water District GSA, Central Delta-Mendota GSA, City of Dos Palos GSA, City of Firebaugh GSA, City of Gustine GSA, City of Los Banos GSA, City of Mendota GSA, City of Newman GSA, City of Patterson GSA, County of Fresno GSA – Delta-Mendota Management Area A, County of Fresno GSA – Delta Mendota Management Area B, County of Madera GSA – Delta-Mendota, County of Merced GSA – Delta-Mendota, DM-II GSA, Farmers Water District GSA, Grasslands GSA, Northwestern Delta-Mendota GSA, Oro Loma Water District GSA, Patterson Irrigation District GSA, San Joaquin River Exchange Contractors GSA, Turner Island Water District GSA – Delta-Mendota, West Stanislaus Irrigation District GSA, and Widren Water District GSA (collectively, the Delta-Mendota Subbasin GSAs) are recognized by the Department of Water Resources as the twenty-three GSAs for the Delta-Mendota Subbasin.

11. The Delta-Mendota Subbasin GSAs submitted six GSPs to the Department of Water Resources for review in January 2020.
12. On January 21, 2022, the Department of Water Resources issued a determination that the Delta-Mendota Subbasin 2020 GSPs were incomplete pursuant to California Code of Regulations, title 23, section 355.2, subdivision (e)(2) (Incomplete Determination) and provided the Delta-Mendota Subbasin GSAs with 180 days to address the deficiencies identified in the incomplete determination.
13. The Delta-Mendota Subbasin GSAs submitted six revised Delta-Mendota Subbasin GSPs to the Department of Water Resources for review in July 2022 (2022 Revised GSPs).
14. The Department of Water Resources evaluated the revised Delta-Mendota Subbasin GSPs, consulted with the Board, and on March 2, 2023, issued its “Statement of Findings Regarding the Determination of Inadequate Status of the San Joaquin Valley – Delta-Mendota Subbasin Groundwater Sustainability Plan” (Inadequacy Determination), which is available on the Department of Water Resources’ online SGMA portal, and referred the Delta-Mendota Subbasin to the State Water Board consistent with Chapter 11 of SGMA.
15. The Department of Water Resources identified four deficiencies in the 2022 Revised GSPs. In its 2023 Inadequacy Determination, the Department of Water Resources concluded that one of the deficiencies (that the management areas established in the Plans have not sufficiently addressed the requirements specified in 23 CCR § 354.20) was sufficiently addressed by the GSAs in the 2022 revised Delta-Mendota Subbasin GSPs, but the GSAs had not taken sufficient action in the 2022 Revised Delta-Mendota GSPs to address three other identified deficiencies:
 - a. The GSPs do not use the same data and methodologies.
 - b. The GSPs have not established common definitions of undesirable results in the Subbasin.
 - c. The GSPs in the Subbasin have not set sustainable management criteria in accordance with the GSP Regulations.

16. The Delta-Mendota Subbasin GSAs submitted a revised draft GSP to the State Water Board in May 2024, which shifted from six GSPs to a single GSP covering the entire subbasin, and adopted a slightly revised GSP in July 2024 (2024 GSP).

17. The Delta-Mendota Subbasin GSAs released six Pumping Reduction Plans (PRPs) as part of the Water Year 2024 Annual Report in April 2025 and revised the Domestic Well Mitigation Policy in July 2025.

18. State Water Board staff reviewed the 2024 GSP and found significant steps were made towards addressing the deficiencies listed in the Department of Water Resources' Inadequacy Determination. In the 2024 GSP, the GSAs:
 - a. Reduced pumping by setting limits for groundwater extractors through allocations in each GSA Group.

 - b. Developed a proactive response to potential impacts from declining groundwater levels, land subsidence, and degradation of groundwater quality via the six GSA Group-specific pumping reduction plans.

 - c. Addressed groundwater quality concerns by agreeing to sample monitoring wells twice a year for an expanded list of constituents.

 - d. Established a mitigation program for drinking water wells that may be adversely impacted by declining groundwater levels and groundwater quality degradation.

 - e. Made significant progress to address impacts to interconnected surface waters by incorporating a model-estimated depletion rate and committing to resolve data gaps.

19. Following the submittal of the 2024 GSP to the State Water Board, State Water Board staff and Delta-Mendota GSA staff met 18 times to discuss the GSAs' efforts to improve the GSP and how the GSAs could address deficiencies identified by the Department of Water Resources and additional issues identified by State Water Board staff.

20. The State Water Board acknowledges and appreciates the efforts of the Delta-Mendota Subbasin GSAs to develop and revise the Delta-Mendota

GSP, including continued constructive engagement with State Water Board staff on technical issues and approaches to remedy deficiencies.

21. Based on the improvements made by the GSAs in the 2024 GSP, State Water Board staff prepared a [Staff Assessment](#) concluding that the GSAs addressed the deficiencies identified by the Department of Water Resources and additional issues identified by State Water Board staff and recommending that the State Water Board return the Delta-Mendota Subbasin to the Department's jurisdiction.

22. On March 2, 2026, the State Water Board released the Staff Assessment to the public, established an April 1, 2026 deadline for public comments regarding the Staff Assessment, and provided notice that the State Water Board would consider the staff recommendation to return the Delta-Mendota Subbasin to the jurisdiction of the Department of Water Resources at a public meeting held on or after April 7, 2026.

23. The State Water Board reviewed and considered the staff recommendation, public comment at the board meeting, and comments received during the public comment period.

24. Based on its review and consideration, the State Water Board agrees that the Delta-Mendota Subbasin should be returned to the jurisdiction of the Department of Water Resources.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

The State Water Board:

1. Finds that the Department of Water Resources' determination that the GSPs for the Delta-Mendota Subbasin were inadequate made the Delta-Mendota Subbasin subject to state intervention under Chapter 11 of SGMA and authorized the State Water Board to, after notice and hearing, designate the Delta-Mendota Subbasin as probationary pursuant to Water Code section 10735.2.

2. Finds that the Delta-Mendota Subbasin GSAs addressed the deficiencies identified in the Department of Water Resources' Inadequate Determination and the additional issues identified by State Water Board staff.

3. Finds that designating the Delta-Mendota Subbasin as probationary under SGMA is not necessary at this time and that the Delta-Mendota Subbasin should be returned to the jurisdiction of the Department of Water Resources under Chapter 10 of SGMA.

4. Directs Office of Sustainable Groundwater Management staff to transmit a letter to the Department of Water Resources formalizing the return of the Delta-Mendota Subbasin to the Department's jurisdiction consistent with the above findings.

CERTIFICATION

The undersigned Clerk to the Board does hereby certify that the foregoing is a full, true, and correct copy of a resolution duly and regularly adopted at a meeting of the State Water Resources Control Board held on April 7, 2026.

AYE: Chair E. Joaquin Esquivel
 Vice Chair Dorene D'Adamo
 Board Member Sean Maguire
 Board Member Laurel Firestone
 Board Member Nichole Morgan

NAY: None

ABSENT: None

ABSTAIN: None



Courtney Tyler
Clerk to the Board