

**STATE WATER RESOURCES CONTROL BOARD  
BOARD MEETING SESSION – DIVISION OF WATER QUALITY  
APRIL 6, 2021**

**ITEM 5**

**SUBJECT**

INFORMATIONAL ITEM TO UPDATE ON THE STATUS OF CURRENT ACTIVITIES IN THE OIL AND GAS MONITORING PROGRAM

**DISCUSSION**

The State Water Board's Oil and Gas Monitoring Program consists of two main areas of work:

- 1) Groundwater monitoring associated with well stimulation treatments (WST) and related oilfield activities
- 2) Review of Underground Injection Control (UIC) projects and aquifer exemption proposals

Senate Bill 4 (statutes of 2013) amended the California Public Resources Code (PRC) and Water Code for WST activities. The legislation created new requirements for oilfield operators, Department of Conservation, Geologic Energy Management Division (CalGEM), State Water Board, Regional Water Boards, and other state agencies. California Water Code Section 10783 required the Water Boards to establish a "Model Criteria" for area-specific and regional groundwater monitoring. The WST related program has been in place since 2014, with area-specific monitoring being conducted at 10 oilfields and regional groundwater monitoring (performed by the U.S. Geological Survey) being implemented at 33 oilfields.

The Water Boards' role in the review of UIC projects and aquifer exemption proposals was expanded through legislation in response to increased concern from the legislature, U.S. EPA, oil and gas operators, and the public. In 2015, CalGEM and the State Water Board submitted a joint plan of action to the U.S. EPA to address California's UIC Program for oil and gas production (Class II wells). Public Resources Code 3131 also passed in 2015 requiring CalGEM and the State Water Board to concur that an aquifer, or portion of an aquifer, may merit consideration for exemption by the U.S. EPA. Since 2015, State Water Board staff have reviewed over 100 UIC projects and have reviewed and concurred with over 20 aquifer exemption proposals. UIC project reviews and aquifer exemption proposal reviews are on-going, and the UIC program has also begun to review pilot projects for proposed carbon capture and sequestration.

Division of Water Quality staff will provide an update on work conducted to date and future work for the Oil and Gas Monitoring Program including:

- WST permitting trends
- Findings from area-specific and regional groundwater monitoring
- Aquifer exemption proposal status
- UIC project review progress
- State Water Board's involvement in carbon sequestration projects
- Public access to program information
- Next steps and future work for the program

**POLICY ISSUE**

None identified.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

None identified.

**REGIONAL BOARD IMPACT**

None identified.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

N/A