



Media Release

Board Adopts Requirements for Groundwater Monitoring in Areas of Oil and Gas Well Stimulation

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Contact: Miryam Barajas
Miryam.Barajas@waterboards.ca.gov

SACRAMENTO – Today the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) adopted methods and requirements (known as “Model Criteria”) for water quality monitoring in areas of oil and gas well stimulation, also known as hydraulic fracturing or “fracking.” These new requirements will improve transparency and reporting about the condition of groundwater near well stimulation operations, providing publicly accessible information for the first time.

“These rules will enhance our ability to protect groundwater by requiring comprehensive monitoring of groundwater near oil and gas operations – the strictest monitoring criteria in the nation,” said Felicia Marcus, Chair of the State Water Board. “The goal is to prevent pollution of water that can be used for drinking water, agriculture and other beneficial uses. And if we then find threats to our groundwater, these rules will allow us to quickly identify and help trace the cause to require those responsible to clean it up.”

Under [Senate Bill 4](#), signed by Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr. in 2013, the State Water Board was required to develop Model Criteria for groundwater monitoring in areas of well stimulation. The [Model Criteria](#) sets the standards for groundwater monitoring plans that oil and gas operators must submit for approval by the State Water Board prior to well stimulation activities. The information collected as a result of these plans allow the state and regional water boards to assess the potential effects of these activities on groundwater.

Additionally, the State Water Board will conduct groundwater monitoring on a regional basis using the Model Criteria.

The Model Criteria document outlines requirements for monitoring and sampling methods, chemicals to analyze, frequency of sampling, and areas to monitor. The adopted Model Criteria are based on [recommendations](#) from Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory which provided independent scientific review, analysis and expertise during this process.

Groundwater that is or has the potential to be a source of drinking water is a priority for monitoring; however, the monitoring will also consider all beneficial uses of water, including



agriculture, especially in light of California's increasing reliance on groundwater due to the prolonged drought and climate change.

Access to safe drinking water is a major issue for California, especially to disadvantaged communities. The methods outlined in the document are critical to meet California's policy that every human being has the right to safe, clean, affordable and accessible water adequate for human consumption, cooking and sanitary purposes (Water Code section 106.3).

"The implementation of water quality monitoring at this scale is unique in the U.S. Valuable water quality data and information will be collected by the operators and through the Water Boards. The data and information will be made publicly available," said State Water Board Deputy Director Jonathan Bishop. "Transparency is a core element of this program."

The State Water Board developed the Model Criteria in consultation with the [Division of Oil, Gas, and Geothermal Resources \(DOGGR\)](#), the Regional Water Boards, public stakeholders and technical experts.

A [Fact Sheet](#) provides additional details on the Model Criteria. Please visit our [Groundwater Monitoring Program for Oil and Gas Production Areas: SB 4](#) for more information.

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