

Sustainable Groundwater Management Act: Chowchilla Subbasin

Proposed Resolution 2025-XXX

June 3, 2025

Item No. 5



Office of Sustainable Groundwater Management

Language Interpretation In Person

Interpretación en persona

ਵਿਅਕਤੀਗਤ ਤੌਰ 'ਤੇ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਵਿਆਖਿਆ

Please visit the table outside this room for a headset or if you have technical difficulties.

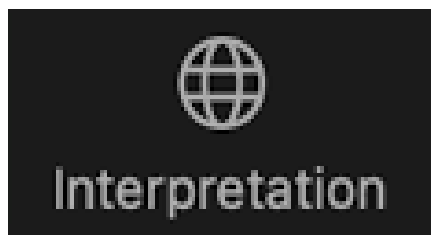
Diríjase a la mesa fuera de esta sala para solicitar un auricular o si tiene dificultades técnicas.

ਇਸ ਕਮਰੇ ਦੇ ਬਾਹਰ ਮੇਜ਼ 'ਤੇ ਜਾਓ ਜੇਕਰ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਹੈੱਡਸੈੱਟ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ ਜਾਂ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਕੋਈ ਤਕਨੀਕੀ ਮੁਸ਼ਕਲ ਪੇਸ਼ ਆ ਰਹੀ ਹੈ।



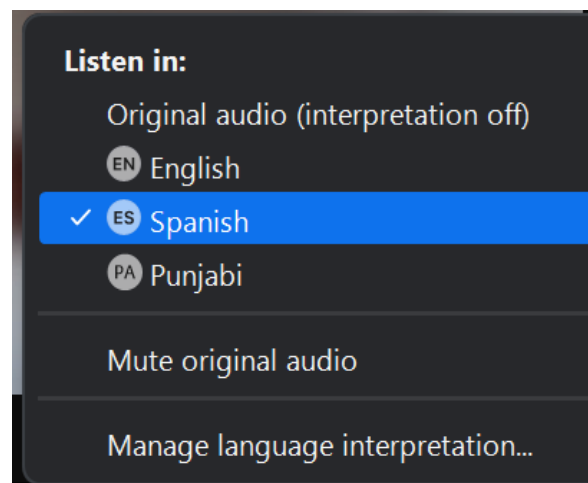
Opción de Interpretación en Zoom

- Seleccione el icono de interpretación desde los controles de la pantalla
- Seleccione español (*Spanish*)
- Seleccione la opción para poner el audio original en silencio (*Mute Original Audio*)




Language Interpretation through Zoom

- Click the Interpretation icon in your meeting controls
- Select Spanish OR English OR Punjabi
- Mute Original Audio



ਜੂਮ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਅਨੁਵਾਦ

- ਆਪਣੇ ਮੀਟਿੰਗ ਕੰਟਰੋਲਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਅਨੁਵਾਦ ("Interpretation") ਆਈਕਨ ਤੇ ਕਲਿੱਕ ਕਰੋ
- ਸਪੈਨਿਸ਼ ਜਾਂ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਜਾਂ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਚੁਣੋ
- ਮੂਲ ਆਡੀਓ ਨੂੰ ਮਿਊਟ (ਆਵਾਜ਼ ਬੰਦ) ਕਰੋ



PI Presentation in English's screen

PE Presentacion Espanol's screen

PI Presentation in Punjabi's screen

To view slides in your preferred language, click on "Presentation in English," "Presentación en español," or "Presentation in Punjabi" at the top of the screen.

Para ver las diapositivas en su idioma preferido, haga clic en "Presentation in English", "Presentación en español", o "Presentation in Punjabi" en la parte superior de la pantalla.

ਸਲਾਈਡਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੀ ਪਸੰਦੀਦਾ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਦੇਖਣ ਲਈ, ਸਕ੍ਰੀਨ ਦੇ ਉੱਪਰ "Presentation in English," "Presentación en español," or "Presentation in Punjabi" 'ਤੇ ਕਲਿੱਕ ਕਰੋ।

For technical assistance, email

Board.Clerk@waterboards.ca.gov

Si necesita ayuda técnica, envíe un mensaje electrónico a

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ਤਕਨੀਕੀ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਲਈ, ਇਸ ਵੈੱਬਸਾਈਟ 'ਤੇ ਈਮੇਲ ਕਰੋ

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Sustainable Groundwater Management Act – Chowchilla Subbasin

Item to consider returning the
Subbasin to DWR



Office of Sustainable Groundwater Management

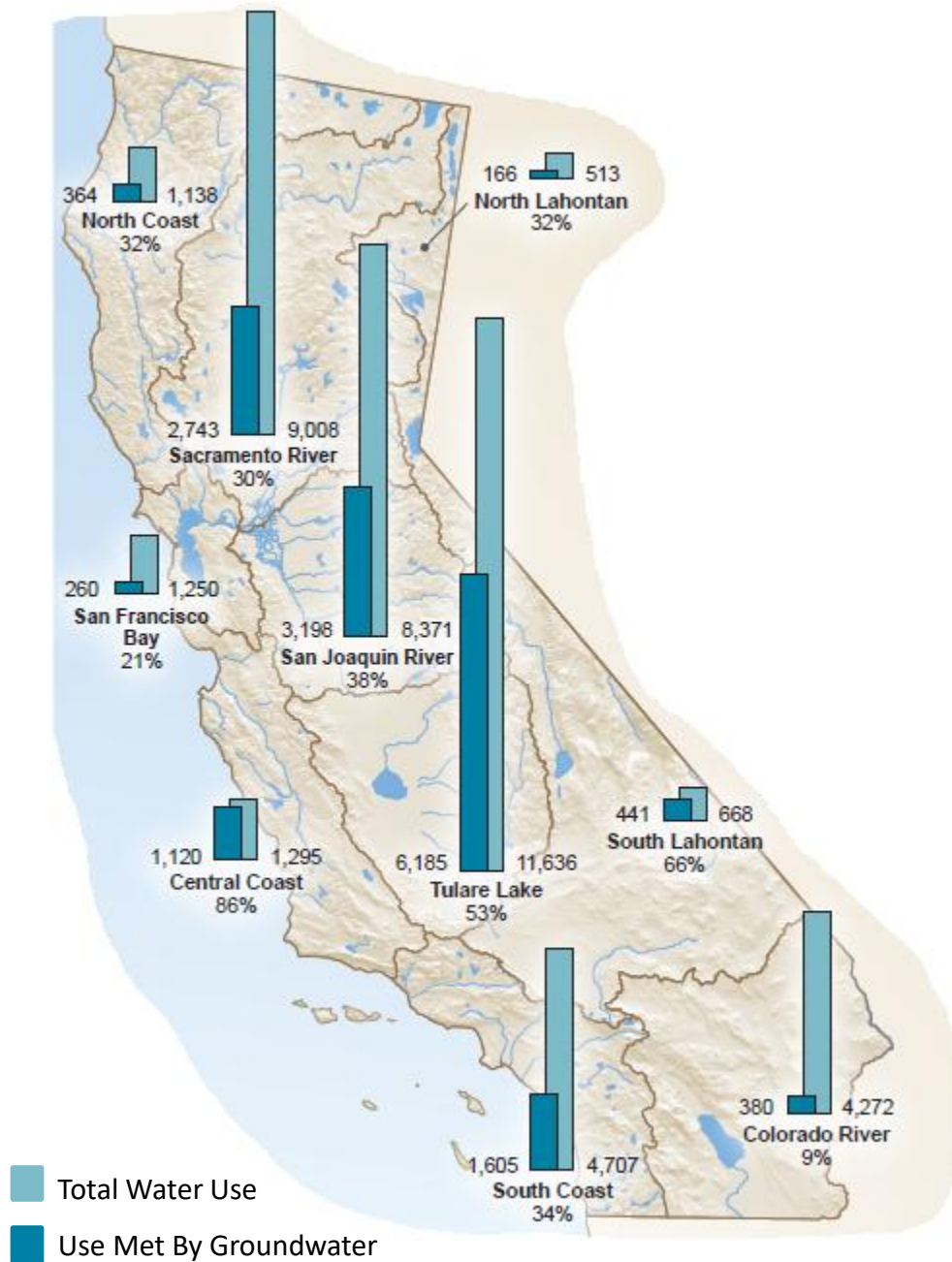
The background image shows a river scene. In the foreground, a large, dark, cylindrical pipe is partially submerged, with water gushing out of its end, creating a white, turbulent spray. The riverbank is rocky and covered with some dry, brownish vegetation. In the background, a paved path or road runs along the river, and further back, there are more trees and a glimpse of a blue sky. The overall scene suggests a water management or environmental issue.

Staff Presentation

- 1. State Water Board SGMA Intervention Basics**
- 2. Chowchilla Subbasin Background**
- 3. SGMA Process in Chowchilla Subbasin**
- 4. Sustainability Plan Deficiencies and GSP Revisions**
- 5. Staff Recommendations for Chowchilla Subbasin**
- 6. Department of Water Resources – Role and Resources**



State Water Board SGMA Intervention Basics



Source: California Water Plan Update 2013

80%

of Californians rely on
GROUNDWATER
for part of their water supply

Sustainable Groundwater Management Act

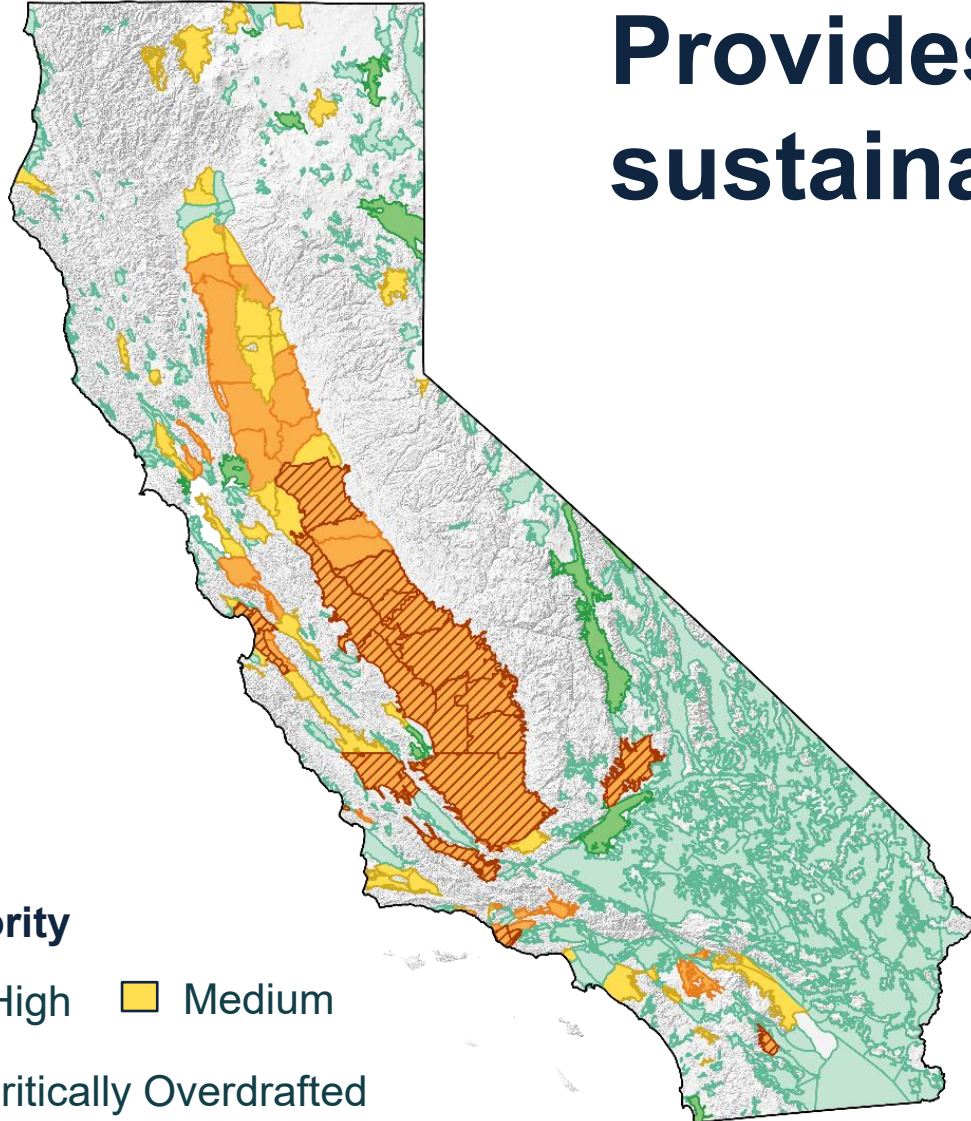
Provides for formation of groundwater sustainability agencies that must:

Create groundwater sustainability plans

Submit annual reports

Periodically evaluate GSPs

Achieve basin sustainability goal in
20 years



What is Sustainability under SGMA?

Sustainability happens when a basin operates within its *sustainable yield* and is not experiencing *undesirable results*.

Undesirable results are the significant and unreasonable occurrences of:



Groundwater
Level Declines



Storage
Reduction



Seawater
Intrusion



Degraded
Quality



Land
Subsidence



Surface Water
Depletion

...caused by groundwater conditions occurring throughout the basin.

GSAs aren't required to address undesirable results that occurred prior to 2015

**Both the
Department of
Water Resources
and the State Water
Board have roles in
State Intervention**

***Department
of Water
Resources***

Makes GSP determinations that may trigger potential state intervention; provides technical input at Board's request

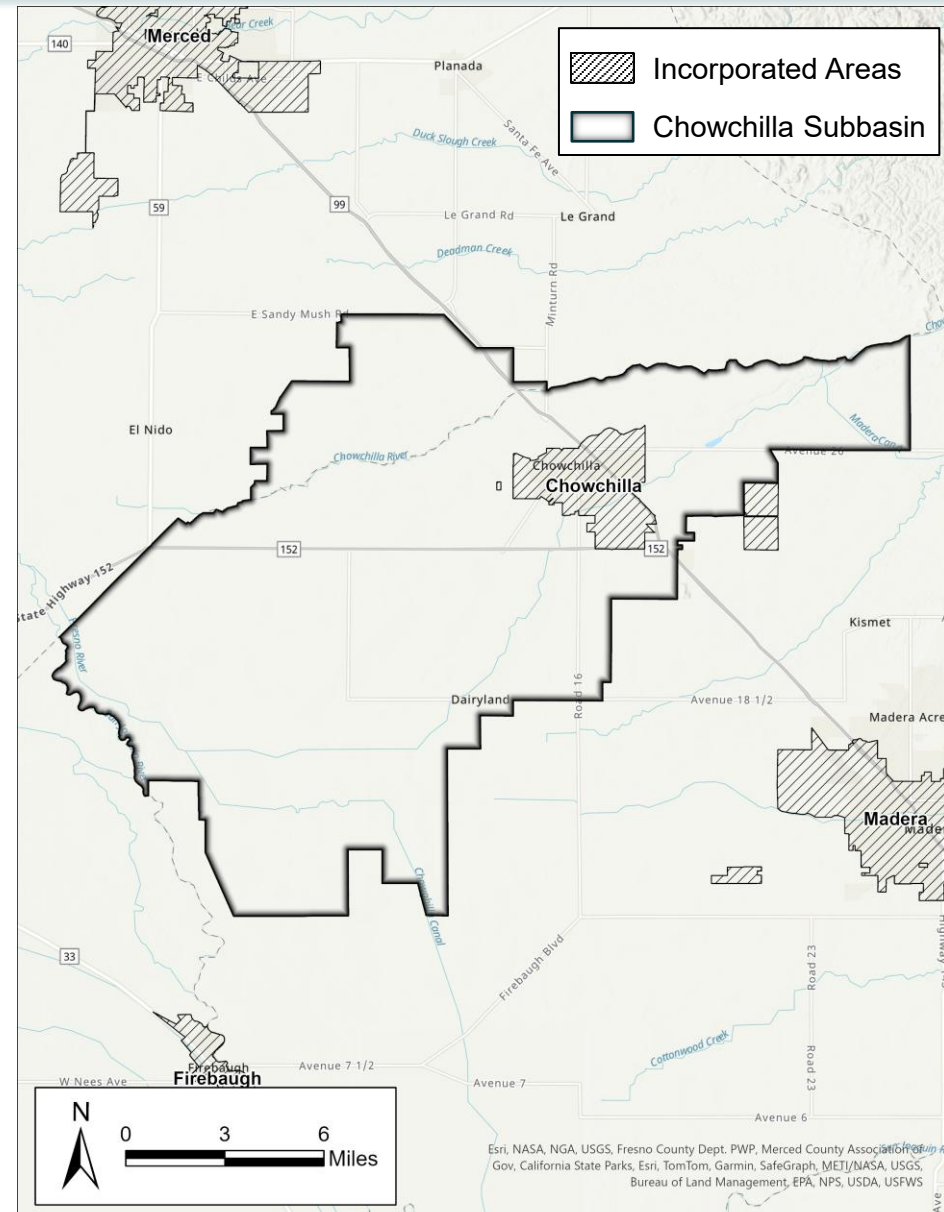
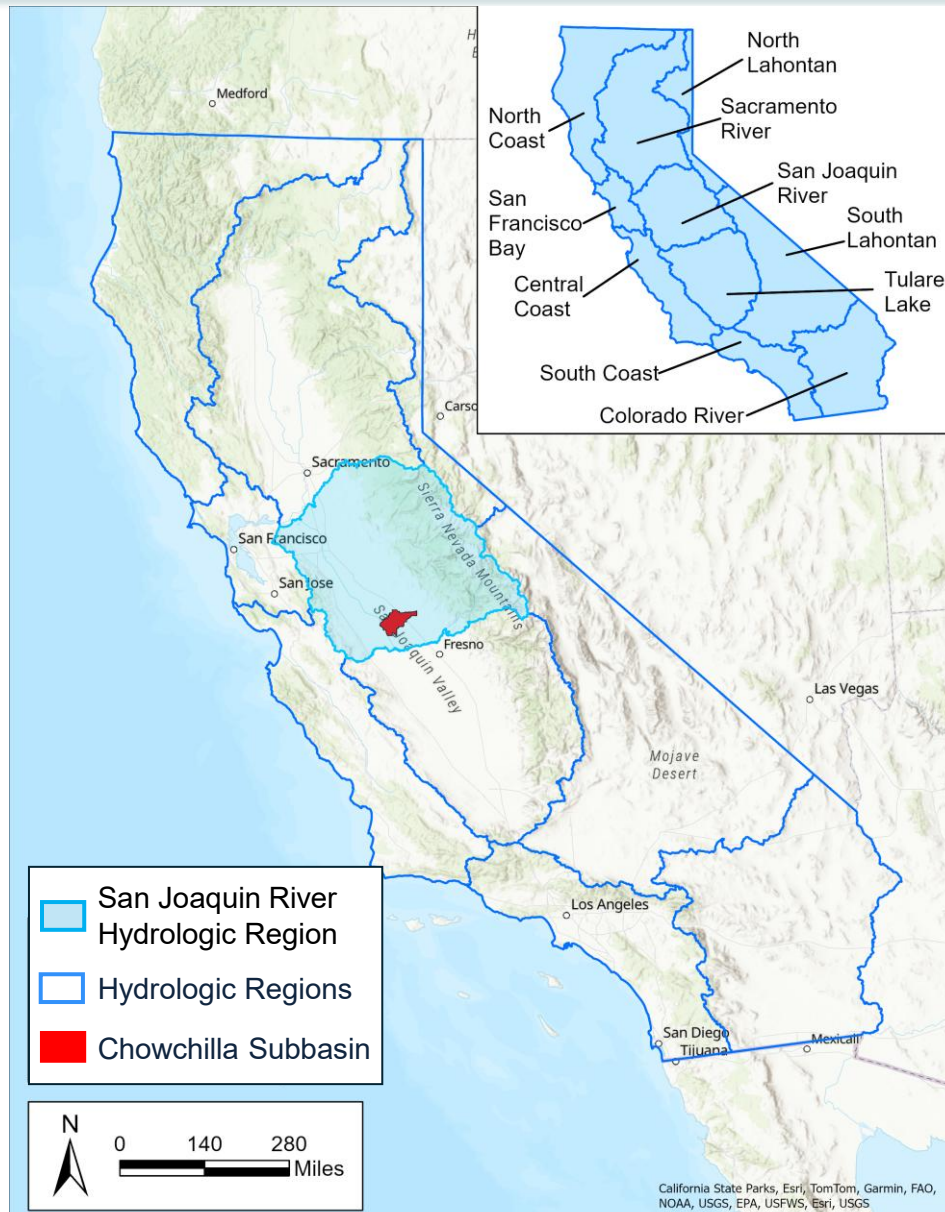
Evaluates local progress, collects pumping data and, if needed, manages basin directly

***State
Water
Board***

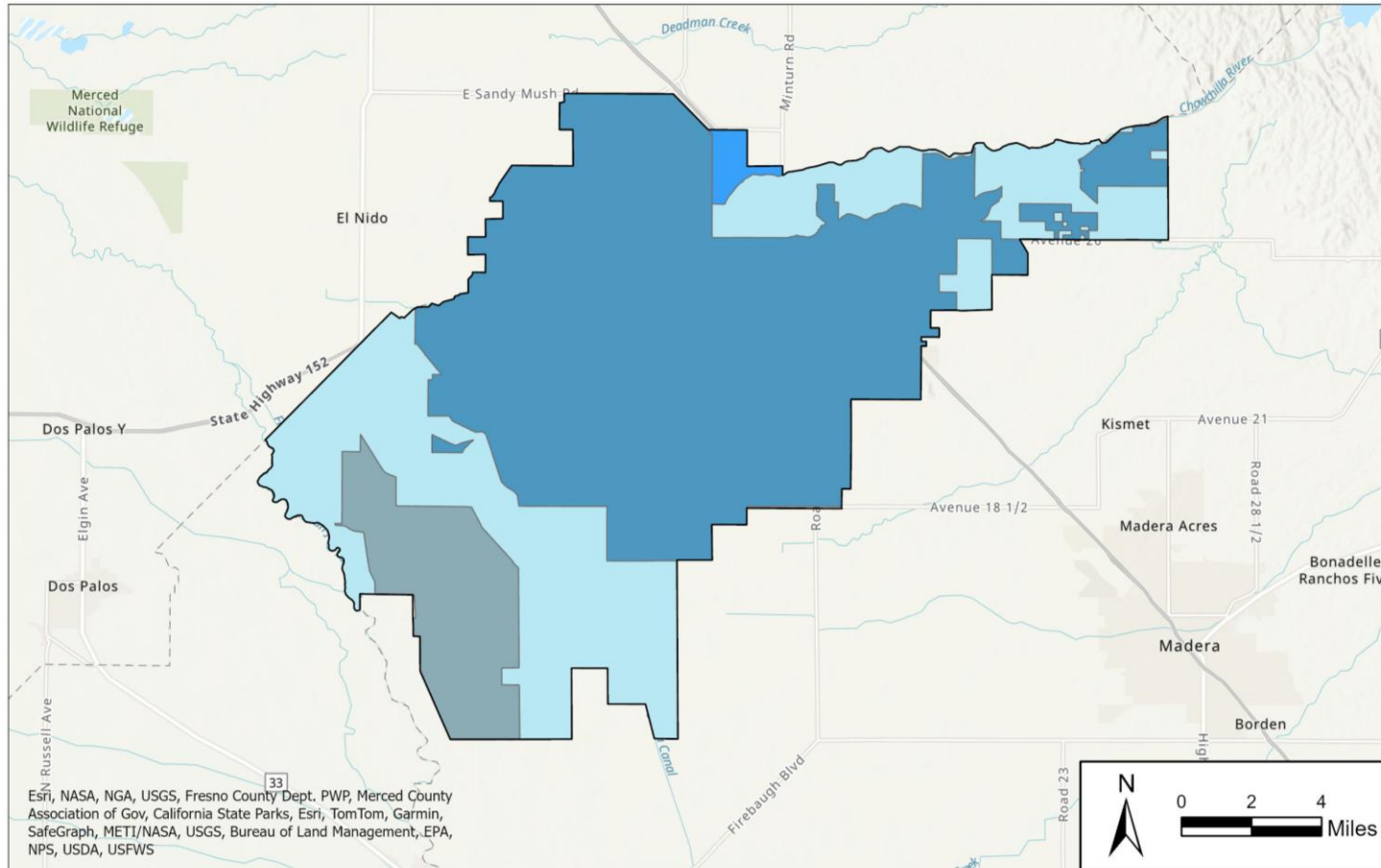
Chowchilla Subbasin Background



Chowchilla Subbasin: Physical Setting



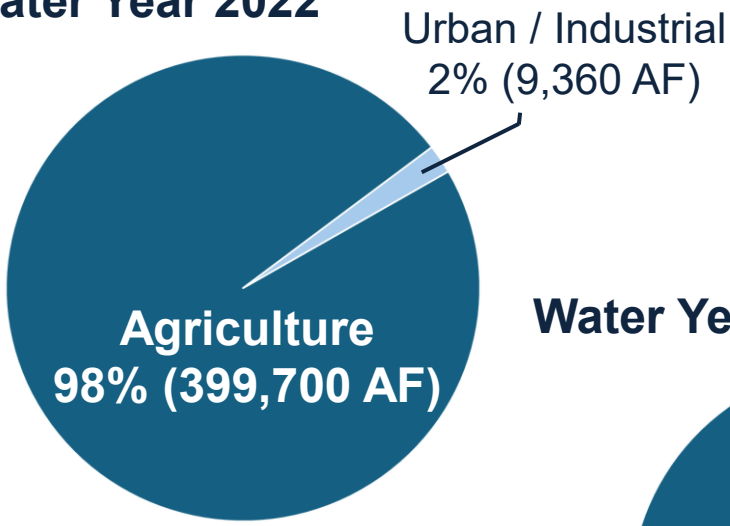
Groundwater Sustainability Agencies



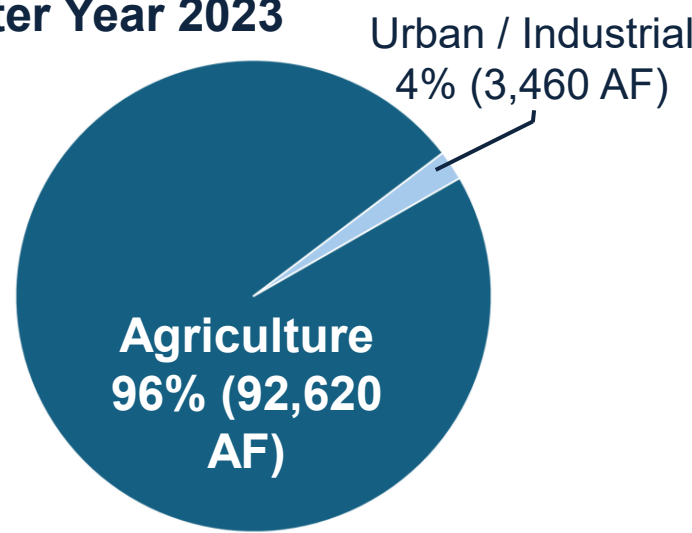
Source: DWR SGMA Portal

Agriculture uses the majority of groundwater and the Chowchilla Subbasin has experienced overdraft

Water Year 2022



Water Year 2023



Average Annual Groundwater Extraction

308,000
acre-feet/year

Overdraft

100,600 acre-
feet/year

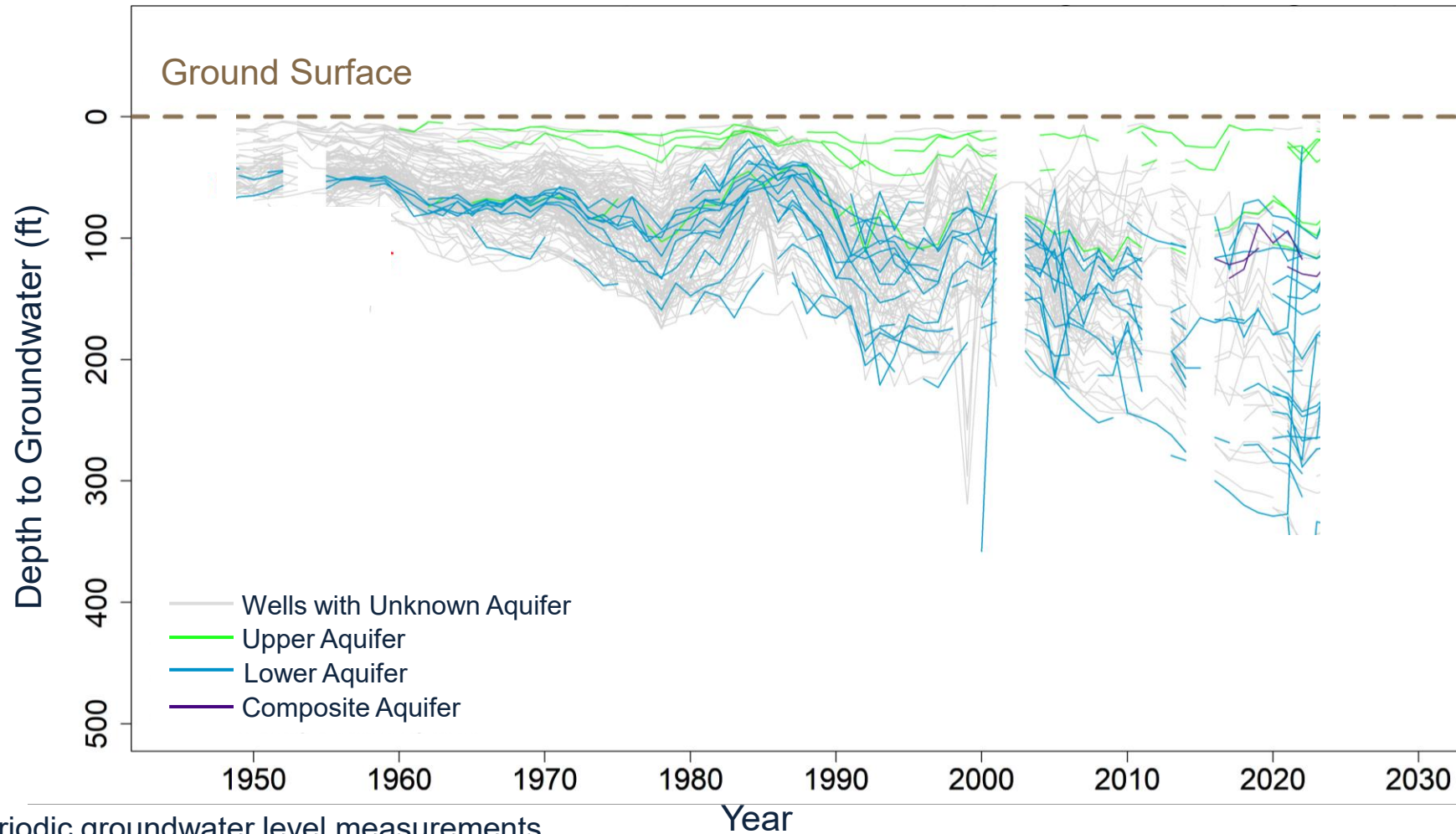
Natural & Artificial Recharge

207,400 acre-
feet/year

Source: 2025 Chowchilla Subbasin GSP

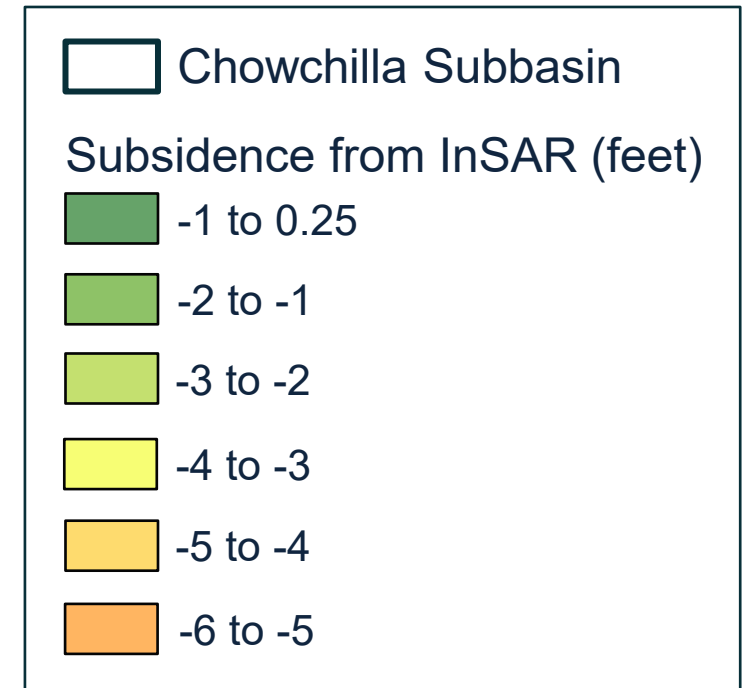
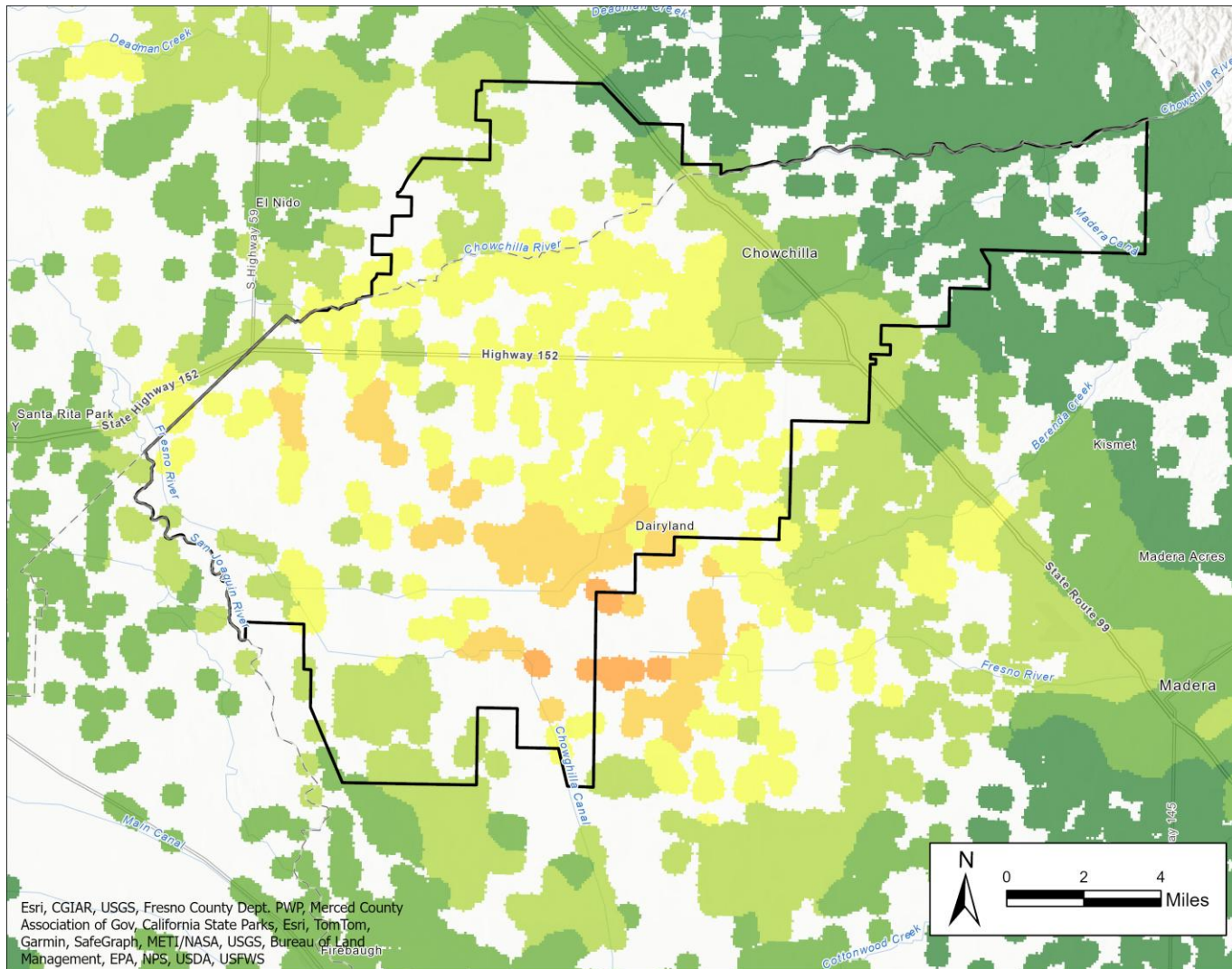
Chowchilla Subbasin experienced long term declines in groundwater levels

Chowchilla Subbasin – Depth to Groundwater (Spring 1948 - Spring 2024)



Subsidence is a problem in the subbasin

- Some areas have subsided **more than 5 feet** in the last ten years.



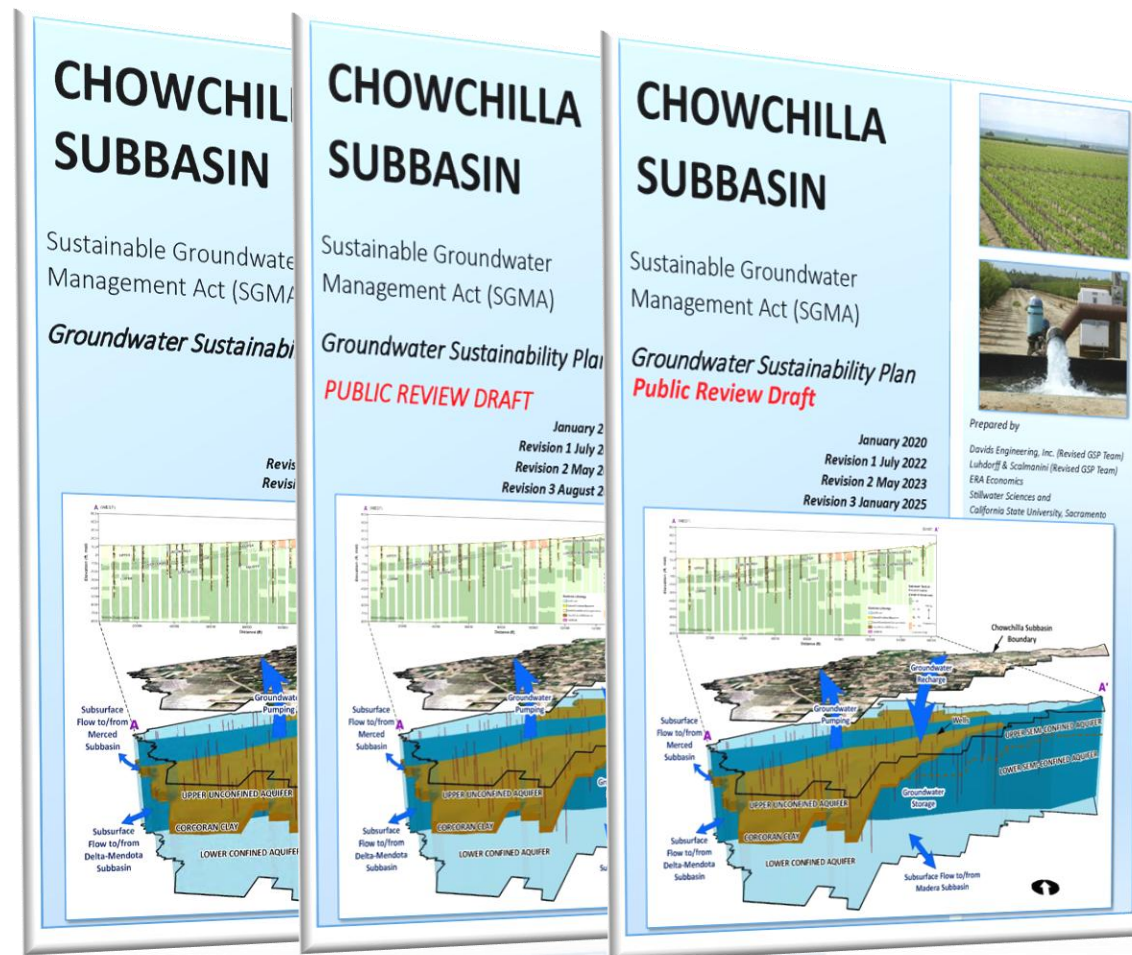
SGMA Process in Chowchilla Subbasin



Chowchilla GSAs continue to be responsive since being referred to the Board



Board staff reviewed three revisions of the GSP



Board staff review of May 2023 Revised GSP

Technical meetings with GSAs


Board staff review of August 2024 Revised GSP

Technical meetings with GSAs

Board staff review of adopted 2025 GSP

2022 Plan Deficiencies – Groundwater Levels



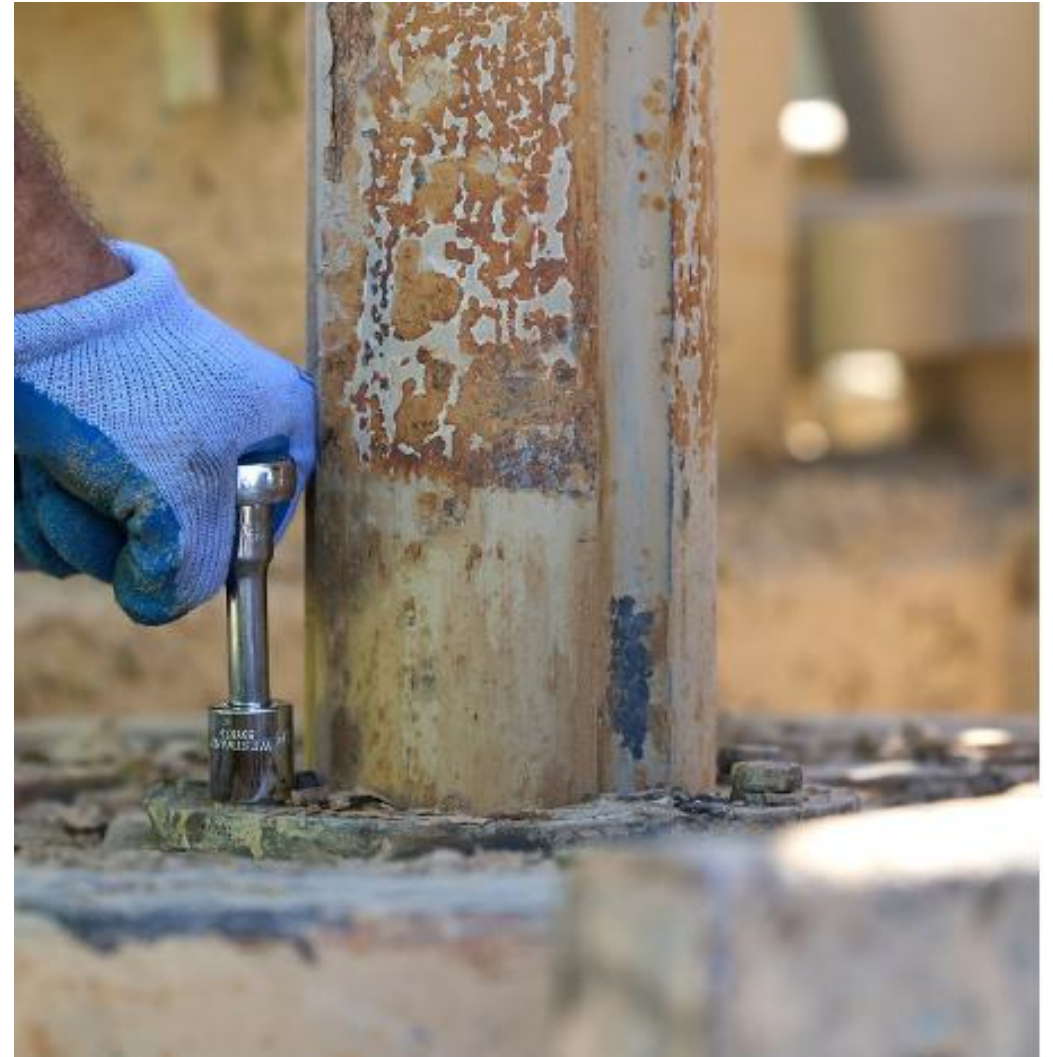


DWR identified the well mitigation program excluded public supply wells.

➔ The 2025 GSP makes public supply wells eligible for mitigation.

DWR noted the 2022 GSP did not justify the management criteria that allowed a percentage of wells to go dry.

➡ The 2025 GSP set management criteria based on representative monitoring well exceedances.



DWR identified proposed groundwater level declines could lead to other worsening conditions.

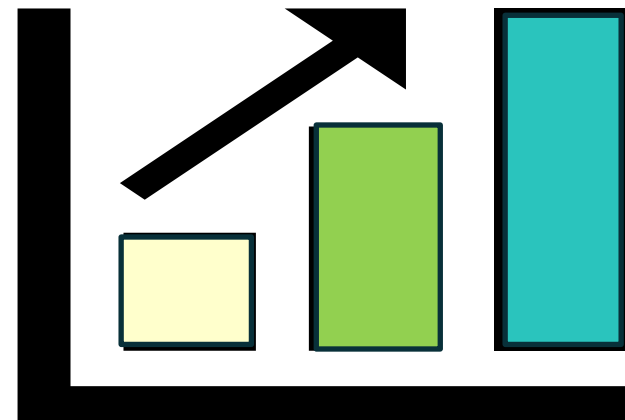
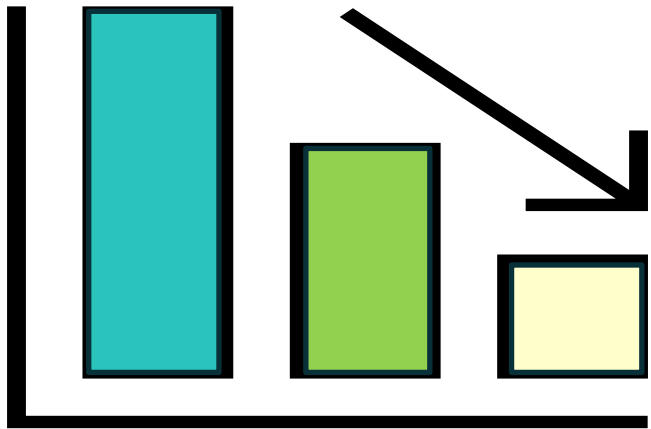


➔ The 2025 GSP raised water level minimum thresholds to 2015 levels.

DWR identified groundwater levels in some areas were proposed to decline further than originally proposed.



The 2025 GSP raised water level minimum thresholds to 2015 levels.



2022 Plan Deficiencies – Subsidence



DWR identified the GSAs did not consider impacts to critical infrastructure and subsidence was allowed to continue.



➔ The GSAs consulted infrastructure operators and updated the 2025 GSP management criteria.

DWR identified the 2022 GSP did not justify using water levels as a proxy for managing subsidence.



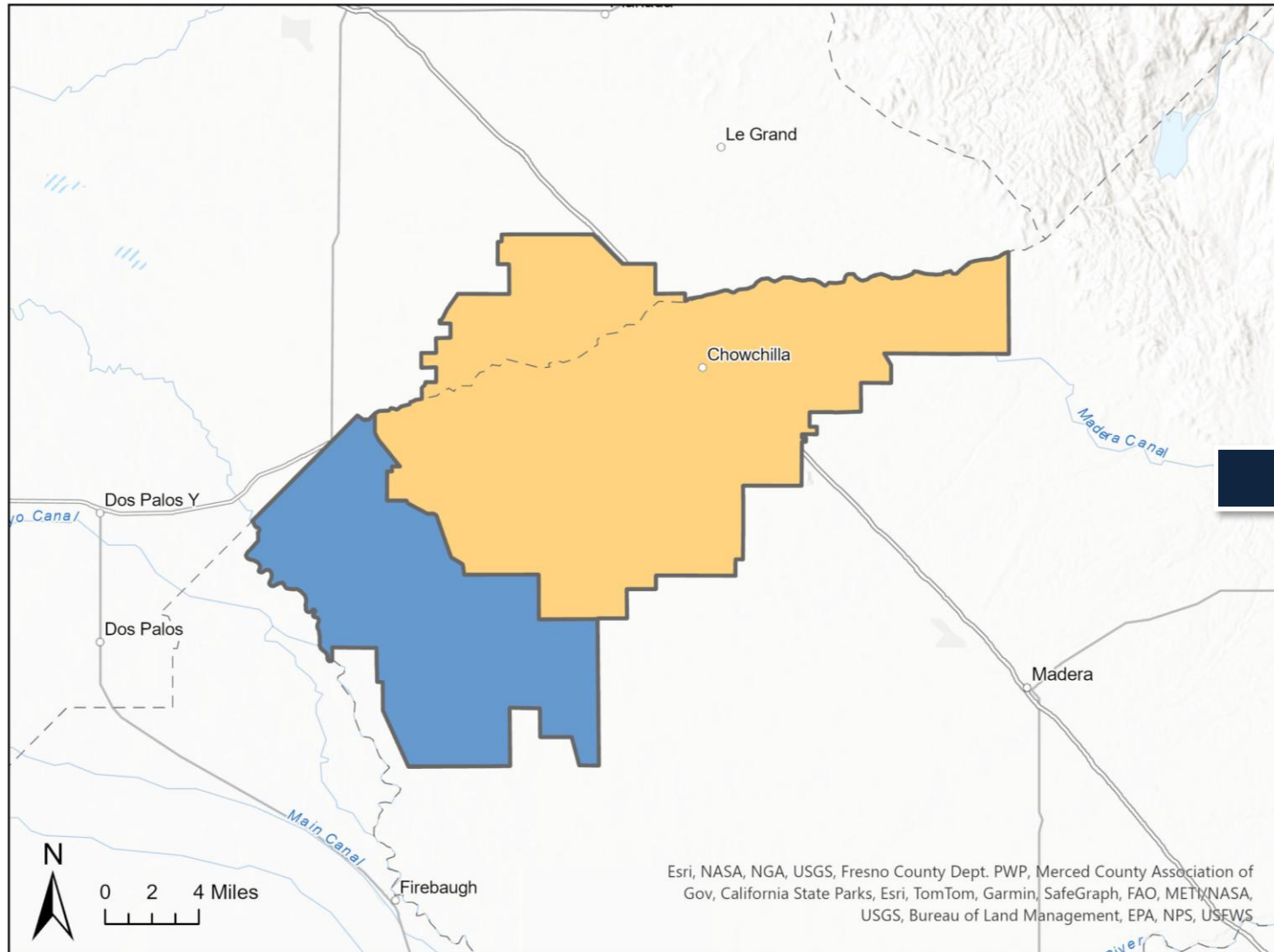
➔ The 2025 GSP set the minimum threshold and measurable objective to zero feet of total subsidence after 2040.

DWR identified the 2022 GSP did not include residual subsidence when setting minimum thresholds.



➡ The 2025 GSP set minimum threshold and measurable objective to zero feet of total subsidence after 2040; updated subsidence workplan.

DWR identified the mitigation in the 2022 GSP was not consistent across the subbasin.




**The 2025 GSP
created
subbasin-wide
mitigation
and demand
management
programs.**

Board staff identified issues



Groundwater level criteria allowed impacts to many wells.



The 2025 GSP set more protective minimum thresholds and undesirable result definitions.

Well mitigation program had limited funding and eligibility.



The GSAs secured funding and the 2025 GSP expanded program eligibility to include water quality.

Subsidence criteria and monitoring were insufficient to identify localized subsidence.



The 2025 GSP established more protective management criteria & included a revised workplan to fill data gaps.

Subsidence mitigation was insufficient and lacked clear triggers.

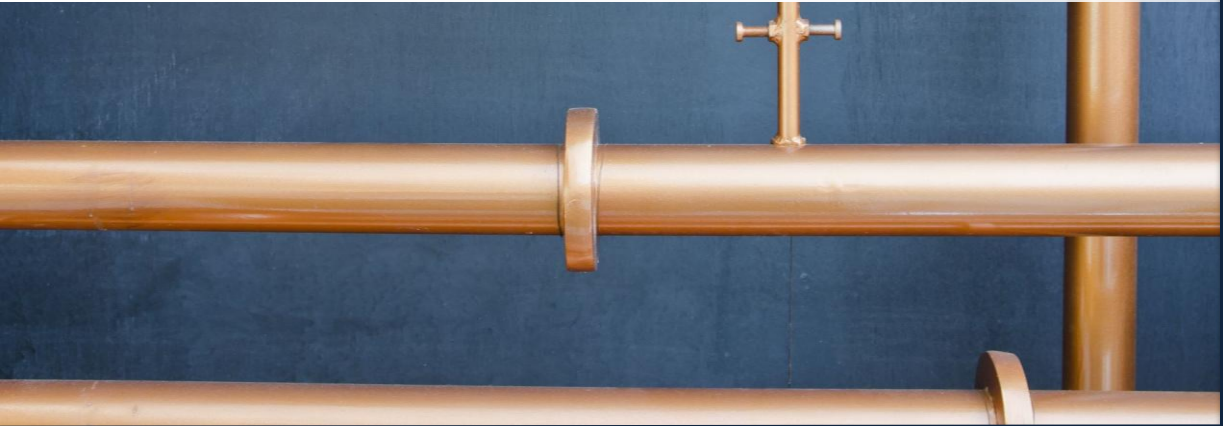
The 2025 GSP included a formalized Demand Management and Subsidence Mitigation Measures Agreement.





Staff developed recommendations for Chowchilla Subbasin

**Refine drinking water
protections.**



**Update criteria and
monitoring based on
best-available science.**

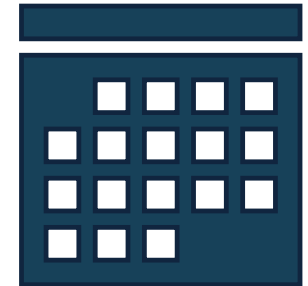


**Strengthen links between management criteria and
plan implementation.**

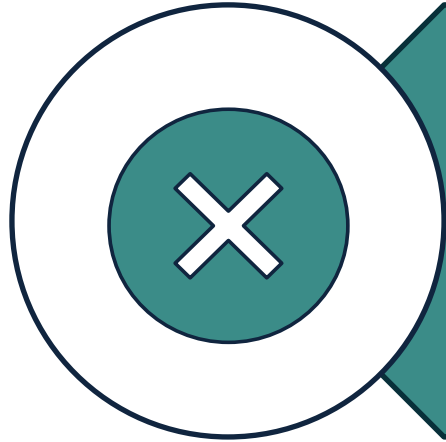


The Staff Assessment was released for public comment on April 25.

Public comments were due on May 23.



Staff Recommendations for Board Action



Probationary
designation not
warranted



Return Chowchilla
Subbasin to DWR's
jurisdiction

Department of Water Resources

Role and Resources



CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES
SUSTAINABLE GROUNDWATER
MANAGEMENT OFFICE

Department's Role

Under state intervention (State Water Resources Control Board jurisdiction)

- DWR has not reviewed Chowchilla Subbasin's 2025 GSP
- GSP posted on SGMA Portal under State Intervention tab
 - Public comments have also not yet been reviewed by Department

If primary jurisdiction is passed back to DWR...

- DWR and GSA will consult to verify any additional information or tasks to be performed prior to commencing GSP review
- Oversight under Chapter 10 of SGMA, DWR will proceed with GSP Review and issue a new determination (approved, incomplete, or inadequate)
- Basin status will remain inadequate in SGMA Portal until new determination is issued



Available Resources

[Frequently Asked Questions: Department's Role in State Intervention \(January 17, 2025\)](#)

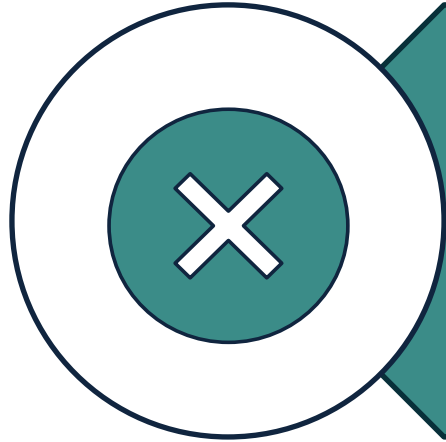
(https://water.ca.gov/-/media/DWR-Website/Web-Pages/Programs/Groundwater-Management/Sustainable-Groundwater-Management/Groundwater-Sustainability-Plans/Files/GSP/Department_Role_in_State_Intervention_FAQ_Final01172025.pdf)

[SGMA Portal – State Intervention Tab](#)

(<https://sgma.water.ca.gov/portal/state/intervention>)



Staff Recommendations for Board Action



Probationary
designation not
warranted



Return Chowchilla
Subbasin to DWR's
jurisdiction

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SGMA@waterboards.ca.gov

www.waterboards.ca.gov/sgma

