

CALIFORNIA WATER CODE SECTIONS ON GROUNDWATER MANAGEMENT  
Prepared by Tim Parker, Parker Groundwater  
Excerpts from the CA Water Code – March 2012  
Available on the web at [WWW.LEGINFO.CA.GOV](http://WWW.LEGINFO.CA.GOV)

10750. (a) The Legislature finds and declares that groundwater is a valuable natural resource in California, and should be managed to ensure both its safe production and its quality. It is the intent of the Legislature to encourage local agencies to work cooperatively to manage groundwater resources within their jurisdictions.

b) The Legislature also finds and declares that additional study of groundwater resources is necessary to better understand how to manage groundwater effectively to ensure the safe production, quality, and proper storage of groundwater in this state.

10750.2. (a) Subject to subdivision (b), this part applies to all groundwater basins in the state.

(b) This part does not apply to any portion of a groundwater basin that is subject to groundwater management by a local agency or a watermaster pursuant to other provisions of law or a court order, judgment, or decree, unless the local agency or watermaster agrees to the application of this part.

10750.4. Nothing in this part requires a local agency overlying a groundwater basin to adopt or implement a groundwater management plan or groundwater management program pursuant to this part.

10750.6. Nothing in this part affects the authority of a local agency or a watermaster to manage groundwater pursuant to other provisions of law or a court order, judgment, or decree.

10750.7. (a) A local agency may not manage groundwater pursuant to this part within the service area of another local agency, a water corporation regulated by the Public Utilities Commission, or a mutual water company without the agreement of that other entity.

(b) This section applies only to groundwater basins that are not critically overdrafted.

10750.8. (a) A local agency may not manage groundwater pursuant to this part within the service area of another local agency without the agreement of that other entity.

(b) This section applies only to groundwater basins that are critically overdrafted.

10750.9. (a) A local agency that commences procedures, prior to January 1, 1993, to adopt an ordinance or resolution to establish a program for the management of groundwater pursuant to Part 2.75 (commencing with Section 10750), as added by Chapter 903 of the Statutes of 1991, may proceed to adopt the ordinance or resolution pursuant to Part 2.75, and the completion of those procedures is deemed to meet the requirements of this part.

(b) A local agency that has adopted an ordinance or resolution pursuant to Part 2.75 (commencing with Section 10750), as added by Chapter 903 of the Statutes of 1991, may amend its groundwater management program by ordinance or resolution of the governing body of the local agency to include any of the plan components set forth in Section 10753.7.

10750.10. This part is in addition to, and not a limitation on, the authority granted to a local agency pursuant to other provisions of law.

---

10752. Unless the context otherwise requires, the following definitions govern the construction of this part:

- (a) "Groundwater" means all water beneath the surface of the earth within the zone below the water table in which the soil is completely saturated with water, but does not include water that flows in known and definite channels.
  - (b) "Groundwater basin" means any basin or subbasin identified in the department's Bulletin No. 118, dated September 1975, and any amendments to that bulletin, but does not include a basin in which the average well yield, excluding domestic wells that supply water to a single-unit dwelling, is less than 100 gallons per minute.
  - (c) "Groundwater extraction facility" means a device or method for the extraction of groundwater within a groundwater basin.
  - (d) "Groundwater management plan" or "plan" means a document that describes the activities intended to be included in a groundwater management program.
  - (e) "Groundwater management program" or "program" means a coordinated and ongoing activity undertaken for the benefit of a groundwater basin, or a portion of a groundwater basin, pursuant to a groundwater management plan adopted pursuant to this part.
  - (f) "Groundwater recharge" means the augmentation of groundwater, by natural or artificial means, with surface water or recycled water.
  - (g) "Local agency" means a local public agency that provides water service to all or a portion of its service area, and includes a joint powers authority formed by local public agencies that provide water service.
  - (h) "Person" has the same meaning as defined in Section 19.
  - (i) "Recharge area" means the area that supplies water to an aquifer in a groundwater basin and includes multiple wellhead protection areas.
  - (j) "Watermaster" means a watermaster appointed by a court or pursuant to other provisions of law.
  - (k) "Wellhead protection area" means the surface and subsurface area surrounding a water well or well field that supplies a public water system through which contaminants are reasonably likely to migrate toward the water well or well field.
- 

10753. (a) Any local agency, whose service area includes a groundwater basin, or a portion of a groundwater basin, that is not subject to groundwater management pursuant to other provisions of law or a court order, judgment, or decree, may, by ordinance, or by resolution if the local agency is not authorized to act by ordinance, adopt and implement a groundwater management plan pursuant to this part within all or a portion of its service area.

(b) Notwithstanding subdivision (a), a local public agency, other than an agency defined in subdivision (g) of Section 10752, that provides flood control, groundwater management, or groundwater replenishment, or a local agency formed pursuant to this code for the principal purpose of providing water service that has not yet provided that service, may exercise the authority of this part within a groundwater basin that is located within its boundaries within areas that are either of the

following: (1) Not served by a local agency. (2) Served by a local agency whose governing body, by a majority vote, declines to exercise the authority of this part and enters into an agreement with the local public agency pursuant to Section 10750.7 or 10750.8. (c) Except as provided in subdivision (b), this chapter does not authorize a local agency with authority to manage groundwater planning within the service area of another local agency. (d) Except as otherwise provided in this part, the process for developing and adopting a revised groundwater management plan shall be the same as the process for developing and adopting a new groundwater management plan.

10753.1. Nothing in this part, or in any groundwater management plan adopted pursuant to this part, affects surface water rights or the procedures under common law or local groundwater authority, or any provision of law other than this part that determines or grants surface water rights.

10753.2. (a) Prior to adopting a resolution of intention to draft a groundwater management plan, a local agency shall hold a hearing, after publication of notice pursuant to Section 6066 of the Government Code, on whether or not to adopt a resolution of intention to draft a groundwater management plan pursuant to this part for the purposes of implementing the plan and establishing a groundwater management program.

(b) At the conclusion of the hearing, the local agency may draft a resolution of intention to adopt a groundwater management plan pursuant to this part for the purposes of implementing the plan and establishing a groundwater management program.

(c) The local agency shall provide to the department a copy of a resolution of intention adopted pursuant to this section within 30 days of the date of adoption. The local agency shall also provide to the department contact information for the person in charge of drafting the groundwater management plan.

(d) The department shall post on its Internet Web site information it possesses regarding groundwater management plans being prepared or adopted pursuant to this part, including information provided by local agencies identified pursuant to this section, and monitoring entities identified pursuant to Sections 10928 and 10930.

10753.3. (a) After the conclusion of the hearing, and if the local agency adopts a resolution of intention, the local agency shall publish the resolution of intention in the same manner that notice for the hearing held under Section 10753.2 was published.

(b) Upon written request, the local agency shall provide any interested person with a copy of the resolution of intention.

10753.4. (a) The local agency shall prepare a groundwater management plan within two years of the date of the adoption of the resolution of intention. (1) If the plan is not adopted within two years, the resolution of intention expires, and a plan shall not be adopted except pursuant to a new resolution of intention adopted in accordance with this chapter. (2) If the plan is not adopted within two years, and the local agency was operating under a previously adopted groundwater management plan, that previous plan shall remain in effect.

(b) For the purposes of carrying out this part, the local agency shall make available to the public and the department a written statement describing the manner in which interested parties may participate in

developing the groundwater management plan. The local agency may appoint, and consult with, a technical advisory committee consisting of interested parties for the purposes of carrying out this part.

(c) The local agency shall establish and maintain a list of persons interested in receiving notices regarding plan preparation, meeting announcements, and availability of draft plans, maps, and other relevant documents. Any person may request, in writing, to be placed on the list of interested persons.

10753.5. (a) After a groundwater management plan is prepared, the local agency shall hold a second hearing to determine whether to adopt the plan. Notice of the hearing shall be given pursuant to Section 6066 of the Government Code. Notice shall also be provided to the department and to all persons on the list established and maintained pursuant to subdivision (c) of Section 10753.4. The notice shall include a summary of the plan and shall state that copies of the plan and any maps that may be prepared pursuant to this part may be obtained for the cost of reproduction at the office of the local agency.

(b) At the second hearing, the local agency shall consider protests to the adoption of the plan. At any time prior to the conclusion of the second hearing, any landowner within the local agency may file a written protest or withdraw a protest previously filed.

10753.6. (a) A written protest filed by a landowner shall include the landowner's signature and a description of the land owned sufficient to identify the land. A public agency owning land is deemed to be a landowner for the purpose of making a written protest.

(b) The secretary of the local agency shall compare the names and property descriptions on the protest against the property ownership records of the county assessors.

(c) (1) A majority protest shall be determined to exist if the governing board of the local agency finds that the protests filed and not withdrawn prior to the conclusion of the second hearing represent more than 50 percent of the assessed value of the land within the local agency subject to groundwater management pursuant to this part. (2) If the local agency determines that a majority protest exists, the groundwater plan may not be adopted and the local agency shall not consider adopting a plan for the area proposed to be included within the program for a period of one year after the date of the second hearing. (3) If a majority protest has not been filed, the local agency, within 35 days after the conclusion of the second hearing, may adopt the groundwater management plan.

10753.7.

(a) For the purposes of qualifying as a groundwater management plan under this section, a plan shall contain the components that are set forth in this section. In addition to the requirements of a specific funding program, a local agency seeking state funds administered by the department for groundwater projects or groundwater quality projects, including projects that are part of an integrated regional water management program or plan, and excluding programs that are funded under Part 2.78 (commencing with Section 10795), shall do all of the following:

(1) Prepare and implement a groundwater management plan that includes basin management objectives for the groundwater basin that is subject to the plan. The plan shall include components relating to the monitoring and management of groundwater levels within the groundwater basin, groundwater quality degradation, inelastic land surface

subsidence, changes in surface flow and surface water quality that directly affect groundwater levels or quality or are caused by groundwater pumping in the basin, and a description of how recharge areas identified in the plan substantially contribute to the replenishment of the groundwater basin.

(2) For purposes of implementing paragraph (1), the local agency shall prepare a plan to involve other agencies that enables the local agency to work cooperatively with other public entities whose service area or boundary overlies the groundwater basin.

(3) For purposes of implementing paragraph (1), the local agency shall prepare a map that details the area of the groundwater basin, as defined in the department's Bulletin No. 118, and the area of the local agency, that will be subject to the plan, as well as the boundaries of other local agencies that overlie the basin in which the agency is developing a groundwater management plan.

(4) (A) Commencing January 1, 2013, for purposes of implementing paragraph (1), the groundwater management plan shall include a map identifying the recharge areas for the groundwater basin.

(B) The local agency shall provide the map required pursuant to subparagraph (A) to the appropriate local planning agencies after adoption of the groundwater management plan.

(C) Upon submitting a map pursuant to subparagraph (B), the local agency shall notify the department and all persons on the list established and maintained pursuant to subdivision (c) of Section 10753.4.

(D) For purposes of this paragraph, "map identifying the recharge areas" means a map that identifies, or maps that identify, the current recharge areas that substantially contribute to the replenishment of the groundwater basin.

(5) The local agency shall adopt monitoring protocols that are designed to detect changes in groundwater levels, groundwater quality, inelastic surface subsidence for basins for which subsidence has been identified as a potential problem, and flow and quality of surface water that directly affect groundwater levels or quality or are caused by groundwater pumping in the basin. The monitoring protocols shall be designed to generate information that promotes efficient and effective groundwater management.

(6) Local agencies that are located in areas outside the groundwater basins delineated on the latest edition of the department's groundwater basin and subbasin map shall prepare groundwater management plans incorporating the components in this subdivision, and shall use geologic and hydrologic principles appropriate to those areas.

(b) (1) (A) A local agency may receive state funds administered by the department for groundwater projects or for other projects that directly affect groundwater levels or quality if it prepares and implements, participates in, or consents to be subject to, a groundwater management plan, a basinwide management plan, or other integrated regional water management program or plan that meets, or is in the process of meeting, the requirements of subdivision (a). A local agency with an existing groundwater management plan that meets the requirements of subdivision (a), or a local agency that completes an update of its plan to meet the requirements of subdivision (a) within one year of applying for funds, shall be given priority consideration for state funds administered by the department over local agencies that are in the process of developing a groundwater management plan. The department shall withhold funds from the project until the update of the groundwater management plan is complete.

(B) Notwithstanding subparagraph (A), a local agency that manages groundwater under any other provision of existing law that meets the requirements of subdivision (a), or that completes an update of its plan to meet the requirements of subdivision (a) within one year of applying for funding, shall be eligible for funding administered by the department. The department shall withhold funds from a project until the update of the groundwater management plan is complete.

(C) Notwithstanding subparagraph (A), a local agency that conforms to the requirements of an adjudication of water rights in the groundwater basin is in compliance with subdivision (a). For purposes of this subparagraph, an "adjudication" includes an adjudication under Section 2101, an administrative adjudication, and an adjudication in state or federal court.

(D) Subparagraphs (A) and (B) do not apply to proposals for funding under Part 2.78 (commencing with Section 10795), or to funds authorized or appropriated prior to September 1, 2002.

(E) A local agency may request state funds to map groundwater recharge areas pursuant to paragraph (4) of subdivision (a) to the extent that the request for state funds is consistent with eligibility requirements that are applicable to the use of the requested funds. (2) Upon the adoption of a groundwater management plan in accordance with this part, the local agency shall submit a copy of the plan to the department, in an electronic format, if practicable, approved by the department. The department shall make available to the public copies of the plan received pursuant to this part.

10753.8. A groundwater management plan may include components relating to all of the following:

- (a) The control of saline water intrusion.
- (b) Identification and management of wellhead protection areas and recharge areas.
- (c) Regulation of the migration of contaminated groundwater.
- (d) The administration of a well abandonment and well destruction program.
- (e) Mitigation of conditions of overdraft.
- (f) Replenishment of groundwater extracted by water producers.
- (g) Monitoring of groundwater levels and storage.
- (h) Facilitating conjunctive use operations.
- (i) Identification of well construction policies.
- (j) The construction and operation by the local agency of groundwater contamination cleanup, recharge, storage, conservation, water recycling, and extraction projects.
- (k) The development of relationships with state and federal regulatory agencies.
- (l) The review of land use plans and coordination with land use planning agencies to assess activities which create a reasonable risk of groundwater contamination.

10753.9. (a) A local agency shall adopt rules and regulations to implement and enforce a groundwater management plan adopted pursuant to this part.

(b) Nothing in this part shall be construed as authorizing the local agency to make a binding determination of the water rights of any person or entity.

(c) Nothing in this part shall be construed as authorizing the local agency to limit or suspend extractions unless the local agency has determined through study and investigation that groundwater replenishment programs or other alternative sources of water supply

have proved insufficient or infeasible to lessen the demand for groundwater.

10753.10. In adopting rules and regulations pursuant to Section 10753.9, the local agency shall consider the potential impact of those rules and regulations on business activities, including agricultural operations, and to the extent practicable and consistent with the protection of the groundwater resources, minimize any adverse impacts on those business activities.

10753.11. A plan shall not be considered invalid, and the local agency shall not be required to recirculate the plan for public comment or to delay implementation of the plan, if the local agency substantially complies with the public notice provisions of this chapter.

---

10754. For purposes of groundwater management, a local agency that adopts a groundwater management plan pursuant to this part has the authority of a water replenishment district pursuant to Part 4 (commencing with Section 60220) of Division 18 and may fix and collect fees and assessments for groundwater management in accordance with Part 6 (commencing with Section 60300) of Division 18.

10754.2. (a) Subject to Section 10754.3, except as specified in subdivision (b), a local agency that adopts a groundwater management plan pursuant to this part, may impose equitable annual fees and assessments for groundwater management based on the amount of groundwater extracted from the groundwater basin within the area included in the groundwater management plan to pay for costs incurred by the local agency for groundwater management, including, but not limited to, the costs associated with the acquisition of replenishment water, administrative and operating costs, and costs of construction of capital facilities necessary to implement the groundwater management plan.

(b) The local agency may not impose fees or assessments on the extraction and replacement of groundwater pursuant to a groundwater remediation program required by other provisions of law or a groundwater storage contract with the local agency.

10754.3. Before a local agency may levy a water management assessment pursuant to Section 10754.2 or otherwise fix and collect fees for the replenishment or extraction of groundwater pursuant to this part, the local agency shall hold an election on the proposition of whether or not the local agency shall be authorized to levy a groundwater management assessment or fix and collect fees for the replenishment or extraction of groundwater. The local agency shall be so authorized if a majority of the votes cast at the election is in favor of the proposition. The election shall be conducted in the manner prescribed by the laws applicable to the local agency or, if there are no laws so applicable, then as prescribed by laws relating to local elections. The election shall be conducted only within the portion of the jurisdiction of the local agency subject to groundwater management pursuant to this part.

10755. (a) If a local agency annexes land subject to a groundwater management plan adopted pursuant to this part, the local agency annexing the land shall comply with the groundwater management plan for the annexed property.

(b) If a local agency subject to a groundwater management plan adopted pursuant to this part annexes land not subject to a groundwater management plan adopted pursuant to this part at the time of annexation, the annexed territory shall be subject to the groundwater management plan of the local agency annexing the land.

10755.2. (a) It is the intent of the Legislature to encourage local agencies, within the same groundwater basin, that are authorized to adopt groundwater management plans pursuant to this part, to adopt and implement a coordinated groundwater management plan.

(b) For the purpose of adopting and implementing a coordinated groundwater management program pursuant to this part, a local agency may enter into a joint powers agreement pursuant to Chapter 5 (commencing with Section 6500) of Division 7 of Title 1 of the Government Code with public agencies, or a memorandum of understanding with public or private entities providing water service.

(c) A local agency may enter into agreements with public entities or private parties for the purpose of implementing a coordinated groundwater management plan.

10755.3. Local agencies within the same groundwater basin that conduct groundwater management programs within that basin pursuant to this part, and cities and counties that either manage groundwater pursuant to this part or have ordinances relating to groundwater within that basin, shall, at least annually, meet to coordinate those programs.

10755.4. Except in those groundwater basins that are subject to critical conditions of groundwater overdraft, as identified in the department's Bulletin 118-80, revised on December 24, 1982, the requirements of a groundwater management plan that is implemented pursuant to this part do not apply to the extraction of groundwater by means of a groundwater extraction facility that is used to provide water for domestic purposes to a single-unit residence and, if applicable, any dwelling unit authorized to be constructed pursuant to Section 65852.1 or 65852.2 of the Government Code.

---

10795. This part shall be known and may be cited as the Local Groundwater Management Assistance Act of 2000.

10795.2. There is hereby created the Local Groundwater Assistance Fund which shall be administered by the department.

10795.4. Upon appropriation by the Legislature, the money in the fund may be used by the department to assist local public agencies by awarding grants to those agencies to conduct groundwater studies or to carry out groundwater monitoring and management activities in accordance with Part 2.75 (commencing with Section 10750) or other authority pursuant to which local public agencies manage groundwater resources, or both, including the development of groundwater management plans, as provided for in subdivision (a) of Section 10753.7.

10795.6. The department, in making grants pursuant to this part, shall do both of the following:

- (a) Award grants based on the recommendations submitted by the Technical Advisory Panel. The panel shall give priority to a local public agency that has adopted a groundwater management plan and submitted an application that demonstrates collaboration by that local public agency with other local public agencies with regard to the management of the affected groundwater basin.
- (b) Ensure that the money in the fund is allocated in a geographically balanced manner among the regions of the state that are capable of, and interested in, implementing groundwater management programs.

10795.8. The department may enter into contracts and may adopt regulations subject to the advice and review of the Technical Advisory Panel, to carry out this part. Any grant contract entered into pursuant to this part may include provisions that the department determines are necessary.

10795.10. An application for a grant under this part shall be made to the department in the form and with the supporting materials prescribed by the department.

- 10795.12. (a) A Technical Advisory Panel shall review applications for grants based on criteria developed by the panel.
- (b) The Technical Advisory Panel shall review applications and indicate whether, in its opinion, an application should be given priority pursuant to subdivisions (a) and (b) of Section 10795.6, and may place conditions on its recommendation for the funding of a specific project. These conditions may include requirements for additional clarification or further explanation of certain aspects of the project.

- 10795.14. (a) The Technical Advisory Panel shall be comprised of individuals appointed by the Secretary of the Resources Agency.
- (b) (1) Panelists shall have background experience, or general knowledge, in the area of groundwater resources. (2) Panelists shall include all of the following:
  - (A) At least three individuals who currently serve on the board of directors of a local public agency that has adopted a groundwater management plan.
  - (B) A licensed civil engineer.
  - (C) A licensed geologist.
  - (D) A licensed hydrogeologist.
  - (E) At least one individual representing each of the hydrologic study areas shown in Figure 3 of the department's Bulletin 118-80, entitled "Ground Water Basins in California: A Report to the Legislature in Response to Water Code Section 12924."
- (c) The number of individuals serving on the Technical Advisory Panel shall be determined by the Secretary of the Resources Agency.

- 10795.16. (a) If a member of the Technical Advisory Panel, or a member of his or her immediate family, is employed by a grant applicant, the employer of a grant applicant, or a consultant or independent contractor employed by a grant applicant, the panel member shall make that disclosure to the other members of the panel and shall not participate in the review of the grant application of that applicant.
- (b) The Technical Advisory Panel shall operate on principles of collaboration. Panelists shall be appointed who are committed to working together with other interests for the long-term benefit of

California groundwater resources and the people who rely on those resources.

(c) Panelists shall be residents of the state and have an interest in the preservation, protection, and enhancement of the state's groundwater resources.

(d) Panelists shall not be employees of any state or federal agency.

10795.19. A local public agency receiving a grant under this part shall submit to the department copies of all data collected pursuant to the grant.

10795.20. Federal funds may be used for the purposes of this part.

---