

2015 Priority Legislation

Protect Our Groundwater

We need to strengthen and expedite implementation of the 2014 Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) to protect and properly manage our strained groundwater resources and be more prepared for future droughts.

→ **Senate Bill 20 (Pavley) - Public Well Logs**

- SB 20 would require the Department of Water Resources to make well log reports publicly accessible, which is critical to effective and sustainable groundwater management so that wells don't go dry or become contaminated.
- California's vast database of well log information could improve the state's understanding and management of its groundwater resources.

→ **Defend the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act of 2014 (SGMA)**

- Many bills weaken progress toward groundwater management when we should be accelerating progress. Unfortunately, Valley legislators are often behind these bills.
- **We oppose AB 617 (Perea), AB 647 (Eggman), AB 1242 (Gray), AB 1243 (Gray), and AB 1390 (Alejo)** because they roll back the progress we made last year in passing the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act. **We support SB 226 (Pavley) and AB 937 (Salas).** (Turn over for details.)



Ensure Access to Affordable Drinking Water

→ **AB 401 (Dodd) - Low Income Water Rate Assistance**

- Many communities in California, especially fixed-income elderly and low-income minority communities, are facing unaffordable water rates.
- AB 401 would require the Department of Community Services and Development to develop a plan for a Low Income Water Rate Assistance program by 2017.

→ **SB 552 (Wolk) - Drinking Water Standards for Public Water Systems in DACs**

- SB 552 will address administrative and financial barriers to safe drinking water in DACs.



Provide Safe Drinking Water in Schools

Schools throughout California have been impacted by unsafe drinking water at the tap, and many schools face recurring challenges to providing safe water.

→ **Senate Bill 334 (Leyva) - Safe Drinking Water in Schools**

- SB 334 would require: 1) testing at all school sites for lead in drinking water, and 2) the provision of alternative drinking water sources at schools where contaminants are present.

→ **AB 496 (Rendon) - Funding for Safe Drinking Water in Schools**

- AB 496 would allow the Department of Education to use state and federal funds to provide safe drinking water to students during the school day.



Target Drought Funding to the Communities that Need it Most

→ **AB 954 (Mathis) - Low-Interest Loan and Grant Programs for Private Well Owners**

- Few resources are available to drought-impacted communities served by private wells. AB 954 would establish a pilot program to provide low-interest loans and grants to eligible private well owners to undertake water-related improvements.

→ **AB 955 (Mathis) - Emergency Drinking Water for Renters and Businesses**

- Residents of rental homes and apartment buildings are particularly vulnerable to drought conditions due to restrictions on eligibility for public funding. AB 955 would allow the state to provide temporary water supplies to all residents of drought impacted areas, including homeowners, residents of rental homes, apartment buildings, and small businesses.





2015 Priority Legislation, Continued

Defending the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) of 2014

Our organizations are committed to ensuring SGMA continues to be properly and promptly implemented. We are opposed to legislative efforts that rewrite last year's historic legislation before the regulations to implement it are even developed. Local and state efforts to sustainably manage groundwater must move forward, not in reverse!

AB 617 (Perea) - SGMA Groundwater Sustainability Agency Formation

- This bill weakens SGMA by limiting coordination requirements between local agencies and state entities and delays State Board intervention if any litigation is occurring in the basin (including adjudication¹).

AB 647 (Eggman) - Groundwater Storage as Beneficial Use

- This bill weakens SGMA by categorizing water storage as a beneficial use² and creates another layer of water rights that could be in conflict with existing water rights and contracts.

AB 1242 (Gray) - SGMA: Mitigation Requirements

- This bill weakens SGMA and fails to protect communities. It limits the State Water Board's authority to adopt or approve water quality control plans and attempts to redefine beneficial uses.

AB 1243 (Gray) - Groundwater Recharge: Grants

- As currently written, AB 1243 fails to protect communities. The bill would establish a Groundwater Recharge Grant Fund into which 50% of the Water Board's enforcement collections must be deposited. It then limits the use of that fund to grants to local governments and water districts for groundwater recharge infrastructure projects.
- We recommend this bill open the fund to projects that assist impacted groundwater users, particularly disadvantaged or severely disadvantaged communities, in accessing groundwater resources.

AB 1390 (Alejo) - Groundwater: Adjudications

- While we appreciate this bill's efforts to address streamlined adjudication, AB 1390 does not adequately protect the interests of underrepresented and disadvantaged communities (DACs).
- We recommend this bill: 1) provide for attorney's fees and costs for those who qualify as having a significant financial hardship; 2) require translation of notices and clean-up of streamlined notice requirements; and 3) protect and strengthen the goals and process set out in SGMA.

Strengthening the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act of 2014

SB 226 (Pavley) - SGMA: Groundwater Adjudication

This bill would require SGMA to establish a timely and comprehensive method for determining rights to groundwater. This bill would require the process to be available to any court of competent jurisdiction.

AB 937 (Salas) - Groundwater Recharge as Beneficial Use

- This bill would declare that the recharging of a groundwater basin to repel saline intrusion or recover basin groundwater levels constitutes a beneficial use of water if the recharge is consistent with the local agency's groundwater management plan or groundwater sustainability plan.

Additional Bills We Support

Community Water Center, Clean Water Action, Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability, and the Environmental Justice Coalition for Water support additional bills not listed on this document which include AB 156 (Perea), AB 615 (Rendon), AB 1059 (Garcia).

For additional information, please contact Omar Carrillo, Community Water Center's Senior Policy Analyst, at 916-706-3346.

¹ Adjudication is a legal process to determine who has a valid water right, how much water can be used, and who has priority during shortages.

² The State Water Board needs to ensure that California's water resources are put to the best possible use ("beneficial uses") and that the public interest is protected. The beneficial uses of water include: domestic; irrigation; power; municipal; mining; industrial; fish and wildlife preservation and enhancement; aquaculture; recreational; stock watering; water quality; frost protection; and heat control.