



CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES

SUSTAINABLE GROUNDWATER MANAGEMENT OFFICE

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May 31, 2024

Bill Buelow
Santa Ynez River Valley Basin – Plan Manager
P.O. Box 719
Santa Ynez, CA 93460
bbuelow@syrwcd.com

RE: Review of Annual Report for the Central Management Area GSP, Santa Ynez River Valley Basin, Water Year 2023

Dear Bill Buelow,

As the plan manager for the Central Management Area Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP or Plan) in the Santa Ynez Valley Basin (Basin), this letter is to inform you that the Department of Water Resources (Department) has reviewed the annual report submitted for the Basin for Water Year 2023. The Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) requires, on April 1 following the adoption of a GSP and annually thereafter, an annual report to be submitted to the Department. The required contents of annual reports are included in the GSP Regulations (23 CCR § 356.2), as is the Department's role in reviewing annual reports (23 CCR § 355.8).

Once an annual report has been submitted, the Department is required: to notify the submitting agency of receipt within 20 days, review the information to determine whether the Basin's GSP is being implemented in a manner likely to achieve its established sustainability goal, and notify the submitting agency in writing if additional information is required (23 CCR § 355.8).

Based on the review of the annual report submitted for the Central Management Area Groundwater Sustainability Plan within the Santa Ynez Valley Basin, Department staff have determined additional information is required from the submitting agency to meet the requirements of the GSP Regulations (23 CCR § 356.2). Without this information, it is unclear whether the Plan is being implemented in a manner that will likely achieve the sustainability goal for the basin. Staff note one item that warrants requesting additional information pursuant to 23 CCR § 355.8.(b): groundwater extraction volume.

Staff note that some of the groundwater extraction data for water year 2023 was not provided in the annual report or submitted electronically to the SGMA Portal. Groundwater extraction data for the fourth quarter of WY 2023 (Jul-Sept) was not provided due to not being available as of January 26, 2024. The GSA states the volume for this period was estimated based on the previous water year. While providing the estimate for water year 2023 as the water use during the previous year is

an improvement from submitting no values, it does not meet the requirements of the GSP Regulations (23 CCR § 356.2(b)(2)). The GSA should work diligently to ensure groundwater extraction information for the preceding water year is reported by the April 1st deadline as required by SGMA (CWC § 10728).

Based on the issue identified above, the additional information required to be submitted in future annual reports includes the following:

1. Groundwater extraction data that corresponds to the water year reporting period (e.g., the annual report for water year 2024 to be submitted by April 1, 2025, should contain groundwater extraction data for water year 2024).

Additionally, groundwater extraction data for water year 2023 should be uploaded to the SGMA Portal as soon as possible.

Failure to provide additional information requested by the Department in response to an annual report review may prevent the Department from concluding that the Plan is being implemented in a manner that will likely achieve the sustainability goal for the basin, which may result in the GSP being found inadequate and referred to the State Water Resources Control Board.

A few minor issues were noted during the review that should be addressed in the future annual report submittals including:

- The data submitted to the SGMA Portal needs to be aggregated for the entire basin, rather than separate data submittals for each GSA.
- The basin point of contact should submit one annual report for the entire Subbasin each year with the additional GSA specific information included as appendices, as necessary. The one coordinated annual report should document the aggregated data for the entire Subbasin that was submitted to the SGMA Portal while also presenting the GSA specific data and information in tabular form.

Please contact the assigned DWR basin point-of-contact or sgmps@water.ca.gov if you have questions about this notice or the annual reporting process. The Department looks forward to receiving your Water Year 2024 Annual Report by April 1, 2025.

Thank You,

Paul Gosselin

Paul Gosselin
Deputy Director
Sustainable Groundwater Management