



# Board Agenda Item 27

---

DATE: January 7, 2025

TO: Board of Supervisors

SUBMITTED BY: Steven E. White, Director  
Department of Public Works and Planning

SUBJECT: Amendments to the Westside Subbasin Groundwater Sustainability Plan for the Westside Subbasin

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

**Adopt resolution approving the amendments to the Westside Groundwater Sustainability Plan for the 2025 Periodic Evaluation, including portions of Fresno County and authorize the Westside Subbasin, acting as Groundwater Sustainability Plan Manager for the subbasin, to submit the amended Groundwater Sustainability Plan to the Department of Water Resources by January 23, 2025.**

Approval of the recommended action will adopt the amended Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) for the 2025 Periodic Evaluation for portions of Fresno County within the Westside Subbasin, required by Water Code Section 10728.2 and GSP Regulations Section 356.4. This item pertains to locations in District 4.

ALTERNATIVE ACTION(S):

Your Board may determine not to approve the recommended action; however, it would result in delay of submitting the required the GSP Periodic Evaluation by the January 23, 2025, deadline. If the GSP is not submitted by the deadline, intervention from the State Water Resources Control Board (State) will occur, resulting in the loss of local control of groundwater management.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no increase in Net County Cost associated with the recommended action. Cost associated with the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) activities are budgeted through the County Administrative Office (CAO) utilizing Interest and Miscellaneous Expenditures Org 2540. Sufficient appropriations and estimated revenues are included in the CAO's Org 2540 FY 2024-25 Adopted Budget. If there are significant implementation costs beyond the Department's allocated resources, staff will return to your Board for direction and to request additional resource allocation.

DISCUSSION:

As previously reported, SGMA, signed into law September 16, 2014, and codified at Water Code sections 10720 to 10737.8, established a new structure for managing California's groundwater resources at a local level by local agencies. SGMA allowed the formation of Groundwater Sustainability Agencies to manage groundwater resources within a subbasin at a local level. Each GSA was then required to develop and implement a GSP or coordinated GSP in subbasins covered by more than one GSA by January 31, 2020.

The Westlands Water District (District) is the GSA for those portions of the Westside Groundwater Subbasin that are within its service area. The County is the GSA for those portions of the Westside Subbasin that are within the County's jurisdictional boundaries, but outside the boundaries of the District.

On January 7, 2020, your Board adopted the GSP for portions of Fresno County within the Westside Subbasin, as required by the California Department of Water Resources (DWR). The GSP was subsequently submitted to DWR on January 23, 2020. On January 21, 2022, DWR completed its review of the Westside Subbasin GSP and released a letter determining that the GSP for the Subbasin was "Incomplete". The letter highlights areas of the Westside Subbasin GSP that DWR identified as deficient and recommended corrective actions, including the GSP's explanation and elements of subsidence, groundwater levels, water quality and sustainable management criteria (SMC).

After receipt of the determination letter, the GSA addressed the deficiencies and corrective actions and submitted a Revised Westside GSP to avoid being referred to the State Water Resource Control Board and be placed on a probationary status.

On August 4, 2023, DWR issued an approved determination of the Revised GSP with accompanying findings that determined the Revised GSP complied with SGMA and GSP Regulations. The Revised GSP approval recommended additional corrective actions for the GSA to address as part of the 2025 GSP Periodic Evaluation required by Water Code Section 10728.2 and GSP Regulations Section 356.4.

Since the release of the approved determination by DWR, the District has coordinated with County staff in the Department of Public Works and Planning, Water and Natural Resources Division, to address the recommended corrective actions, gathered additional information as part of implementation of the Revised Westside Subbasin GSP, evaluated the effectiveness of the Revised Westside Subbasin GSP, and prepared amendments to the Revised Westside Subbasin GSP responsive to DWR's recommended corrective actions.

As a result, the current amendments to the GSP focus on addressing DWR's proposed recommended corrective actions to amend the Westside Subbasin GSP. The GSA proposes minor changes to Chapters 1, 5, and 6. Chapter 2 updates focused on the Westside Subbasin Plan Area and historical water quality information. The edits to Chapter 3 focus on a plan to address the potential of Interconnected Surface Water (ISW), and revisions to the Sustainable Management Criteria for subsidence and water quality. Chapter 4 amendments focused on updating the projects and management actions based on the programs developed through GSP implementation. The proposed Resolution includes two Exhibits. Exhibit A is the GSP Reference Guide and relevant background materials, and Exhibit B is the 2025 GSP Amended Chapters.

OTHER REVIEWING AGENCIES:

The District has approved the 2025 GSP Periodic Evaluation, by resolution of its board of directors on December 17, 2024.

REFERENCE MATERIAL:

BAI #15 July 12, 2022  
BAI #5 January 7, 2020

ATTACHMENTS INCLUDED AND/OR ON FILE:

On file with Clerk - Resolution

CAO ANALYST:

Salvador Espino