BAY AREA WATER SUPPLY AND CONSERVATION AGENCY
BOARD POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING

June 5, 2026

Correspondence and media coverage of interest between May 28, 2026 and June 5, 2026

Water Supply Management:

Date: June 5, 2026
Source: Maven
Article: NOW AVAILABLE: New Urban Water Use Objective dashboard now live

Date: June 4, 2026
Source: ABC 7
Article: Stanford researchers launch ambitious plan to map and track water

Date: May 29, 2026
Source: Imperial Valley
Article: California lawmakers move to pull back curtain on AI Data Centers amid strain on power and water

Date: May 28, 2026
Source: Maven
Article: DWR updates Water Commission on Bulletin 118, the latest groundwater conditions report, the groundwater trading workplan and the new subsidence BPP

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NOW AVAILABLE: New Urban Water Use Objective dashboard now live
Maven | June 5, 2026 | From the State Water Resources Control Board

The State Water Board is excited to announce the release of the Urban Water Use Objective Dashboard, a new tool that offers water use insights from reports submitted to the State Water Board under the Making Conservation a California Way of Life regulation. With this tool, you can easily access detailed information about individual water suppliers across the state, including their progress towards meeting annual objectives for efficient water use.

You can access the dashboard directly here or through the Making Conservation a California Way of Life page (click on the “Regulation Dashboard” badge). Please note that this dashboard supersedes the prior Water Use Objective Exploration Tool, which will remain online for reference purposes but will no longer be maintained.

Please contact us at waterconservation@waterboards.ca.gov if you have any questions, or need help with completing the required reports.

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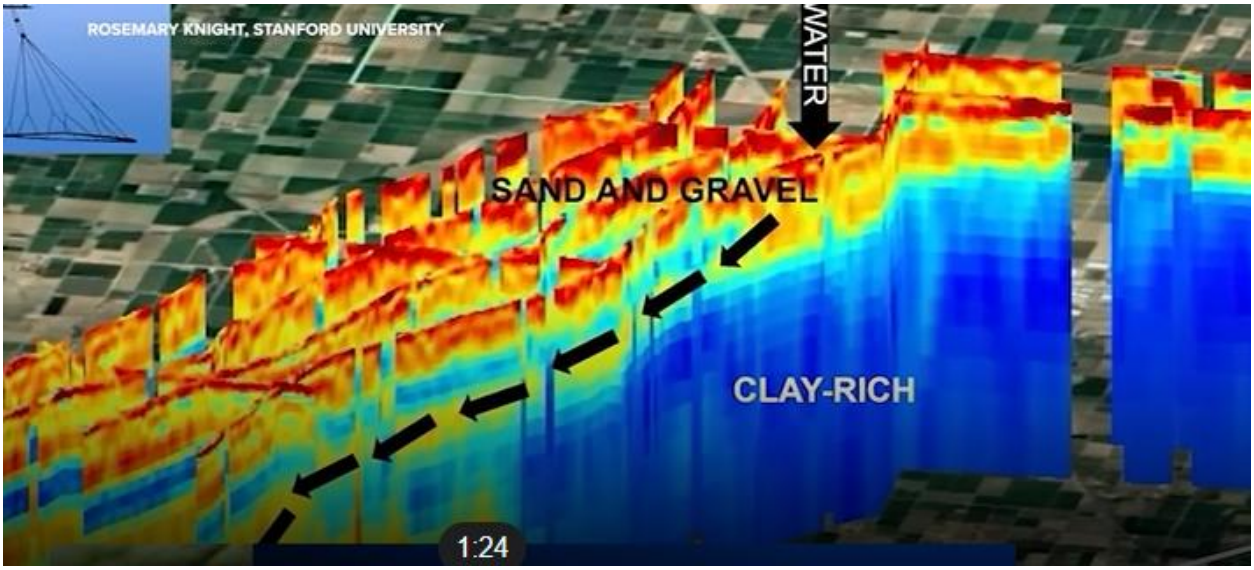
Stanford researchers launch ambitious plan to map and track water
ABC 7 | June 4, 2026 | Dan Ashley



STANFORD, Calif. (KGO) -- A major project being launched by Stanford's Doerr School of Sustainability could change the way we manage a precious resource. It's an ambitious project to map water

And with the potential of severe shortages looming, researchers say it's critical to track every drop .

Following Stanford Researcher Rosemary Knight, PhD, of Stanford's Doerr School of Sustainability, can make you feel a bit like a pirate who's just found a treasure map.

But in this case, the buried treasure isn't gold. It's water.

"Just revealing the complexity of this groundwater system. What's connected to what, where groundwater is connected to rivers, where there are large areas appropriate for storing recharged water. So this is a phenomenal data set that I will probably be working with for the next 30 years, Knight explains.

Knight has spent years mapping the geology of California, using an airborne antenna that pings the ground with electromagnetic sensors. And the results are color-coded maps that show, not just where California's water is, but where it wants to go. It identifies porous soils that allow water to seep deep into the natural aquifer, where it can be stored and replenished in a system known as groundwater recharge.

"So, this gives us our architect picture, what it looks like down there, the big picture plumbing system of our groundwater systems," Knight said.

But now she's joining forces with research teams across Stanford and beyond to measure and track California's water in an even more ambitious way. It's part of a project called "Taking the Pulse of the Planet," and a main goal is to build a network of advanced sensors to monitor dozens of variables that affect our water supply.

"So that we can use sensors in satellites and airplanes, in drones, on the ground, on land to map, measure, monitor all components of the Earth system and human activity," she said.

To understand the power of these cutting-edge sensors, we took a whirlwind tour, starting with the lab of Olav Solgaard, Ph.D., and a technology known as "photonic sensing." In essence, it uses beams of laser light and specially designed chips to probe the water, measuring phenomena ranging from pollution levels to the speed of a flowing river.

"If you imagine shining a laser at some water, you end up with a little, little dancing bit of light, sort of actually kind of like this, where it's flickering and it's changing," said Solgaard Lab Researcher Annie Kroo, pointing to a monitor.

"And you can measure that. You can basically compare the laser that we're sending out to what's coming back, Iris, and see a tiny little change in frequency that tells us how fast the water is moving," Solgaard said.

A few minutes away, Researcher Felix Schwer and Assistant Professor Ettore Biondi, Ph.D., showed us how they're piggybacking on commercial fiberoptic communication lines to eavesdrop on large sections of the Central Valley. They're using a technique known as "Distributed Acoustic Sensing" to detect the noise print of flowing water or even moving traffic, for example.

"You can see this vertical with these horizontal vertical lines. You can see these are all vehicles moving along the highway. I can zoom in. You can clearly see they're moving along the fiber," Biondi said.

And with increasing pressure on California's water system, including an ongoing drought on the Colorado River, Knight envisions an evolution in how we manage the supplies we have -- essentially tracking where every drop goes.

"It's not 'can we?' It's 'how do we?' because we have to. And there is only a set amount of water, and a big part of what I'm advocating we do with sensors is not just explore for more water, explore for more recharge solutions -- but use sensors in a way that empowers us in terms of adaptive management," Knight said.

Better managing vast systems of water, both visible and invisible.

# # #

California lawmakers move to pull back curtain on AI Data Centers amid strain on power and water

Imperial Valley Press | May 29, 2026

SACRAMENTO — As the rapid expansion of artificial intelligence drives an unprecedented boom in data center construction across California, a bipartisan push for tighter industry oversight is gaining traction in the state capitol.

Assemblyman Jeff Gonzalez (R-Indio) cast his vote this week in favor of a sweeping package of legislation designed to pull back the curtain on the secretive, energy-hungry facilities. The move highlights growing anxiety in rural and suburban communities over how the massive computing hubs will affect local infrastructure.

While the tech sector views data centers as the essential backbone of the AI revolution, residents from the Coachella Valley to the Imperial Valley are increasingly worried about the strain these facilities place on public health, power grids, and scarce water supplies.

“People across our communities from Coachella to Imperial are asking important and valid questions,” Gonzalez said. “They want transparency. They want accountability. And they want to know these projects will not negatively impact their quality of life, public safety, or access to resources.”

A push for resource accountability

The legislative package targets the core operational demands of data centers, which require massive amounts of electricity to run servers and millions of gallons of water to keep them cool.

The bills supported by Gonzalez establish strict new reporting requirements and financial guardrails:

- Electricity Tracking (AB 1577): Authored by Assemblymember Rebecca Bauer-Kahan (D-Orinda), this bill requires data centers to submit monthly reports to the California Energy Commission (CEC) detailing their electricity use, overall energy consumption, and noise levels. The CEC would be mandated to publish this data online for public viewing.
- Water Infrastructure Costs (AB 2469): Introduced by Assemblymember Diane Papan (D-San Mateo), this measure prohibits local agencies from approving data centers unless developers provide exhaustive details on their projected water usage. Crucially, the bill forces tech companies to foot the entire bill for any water infrastructure upgrades required by their facilities.
- Drought Planning Integration (AB 2619): Also by Papan, this legislation requires developers to disclose water usage data to local governments and water suppliers before receiving or renewing a business license. It also orders the Department of Water Resources to set industry best practices and requires urban water suppliers to factor data center demands into their long-term drought planning.

Protecting the grid and local ratepayers
Beyond environmental concerns, lawmakers are moving to protect everyday consumers from absorbing the costs of upgrading the electrical grid to accommodate tech giants.

Assembly Bill 2383, introduced by Assemblymember Rick Chavez Zbur (D-Hollywood), directs the California Public Utilities Commission to create a distinct rate structure for “Large Energy Use Facilities,” explicitly including data centers. The bill mandates that these heavy users enter into contracts that fully cover their own utility connection and service costs, ensuring the financial burden does not shift to residential ratepayers.

“For me, this is about balance,” Gonzalez said. “Supporting jobs and investment while making sure we are not putting our communities at risk. That is exactly what the people of the 36th Assembly District sent me to Sacramento to do.”

The bills now move forward in the legislative process.

# # #

DWR updates Water Commission on Bulletin 118, the latest groundwater conditions report, the groundwater trading workplan and the new subsidence BMP

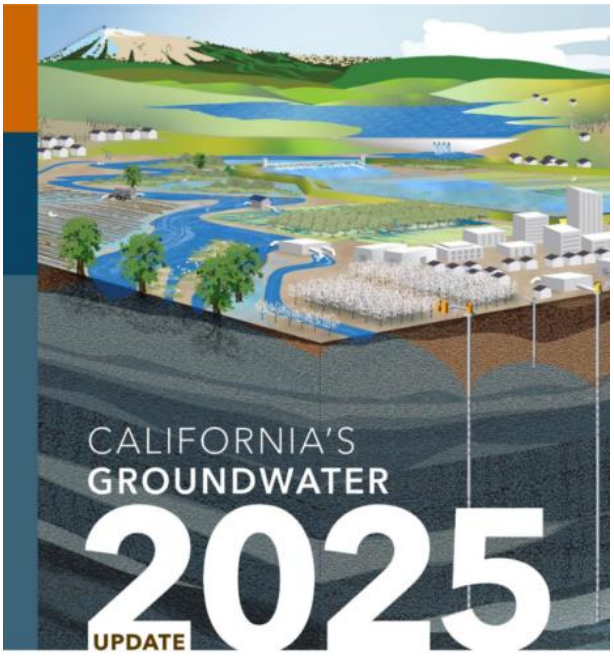
Maven | May 28, 2026

A drone view of Fresno Irrigation District's Lambrecht Basin in Fresno, California, which provides groundwater recharge and groundwater banking, California Department of Water Resources (DWR) is securing resources to assist with expanding the groundwater recharge efforts. Ken James / DWR

At its May 20 meeting, the California Water Commission received an update on implementation of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act, with DWR officials outlining new groundwater reporting, emerging work on groundwater trading and a renewed push to address land subsidence. The presentation was given by DWR Technical Assistance Section Lead Stephen Springhorn, Senior Engineering Geologist Andrew Morgan and Shane Edmunds, lead of the Groundwater Sustainability Plan Review Section. The briefing covered the 2025 update to California's Groundwater Bulletin 118, the spring semi-annual groundwater conditions report, groundwater trading and the department's new subsidence best management practice.

"It can't be overstated, groundwater's importance to California's water portfolio and to the communities, ecosystems, industries, and agriculture that rely on groundwater, so we're trying to meet that importance with more timely, accessible, and relevant information on groundwater, so it can be fed into water planning in the state," said Mr. Springhorn.

DWR shares groundwater information through three main channels: California's Groundwater Bulletin 118, a comprehensive report on the state's groundwater basins; a semi-annual conditions update issued each spring and fall; and the California's Groundwater Live website, which is updated daily.



Groundwater: The Foundation of California's Resilience

Bulletin 118

California's groundwater basins, formed over geologic time, have changed little physically, but the state's understanding of them has evolved significantly as groundwater use has expanded and more data has become available. That evolving understanding is reflected in the latest update to Bulletin 118, the Department's long-running inventory of the state's groundwater basins. Published at varying intervals over the past 70 years, the report defines basin boundaries and compiles groundwater information for each of California's 10 hydrologic regions. It serves as a statewide assessment of groundwater occurrence and conditions, and helps guide decisions on protection, use, monitoring and management.

The latest edition, released in spring 2025, brings together a broad range of groundwater topics and examines how groundwater fits into California's overall water system. The report includes chapters on progress toward sustainable groundwater management, the state's natural and built groundwater infrastructure, water use and extraction, groundwater budgets, monitoring, statewide and regional conditions, and an extensive appendix focused on land subsidence.

DWR also released a highlights document summarizing the report's key findings and recommendations, alongside the full seven-chapter report and its appendices.

Semi-Annual Groundwater Conditions Report

DWR recently released the spring semi-annual groundwater conditions report, drawing on annual reporting from more than 250 groundwater sustainability agencies, along with information from adjudicated areas and alternative groundwater sustainability plan entities. Together, the data cover about 130 basins statewide, representing roughly 95% of groundwater pumping in California's basins.

The Spring 2026 report covers SGMA implementation and projects and management actions, groundwater levels, extraction and changes in storage, managed recharge, subsidence, well infrastructure — including new domestic and agricultural wells and dry wells — and groundwater monitoring efforts.

"The top line message is that the near-term conditions are positive to stable, but long-term deficits persist," said Mr. Springhorn.

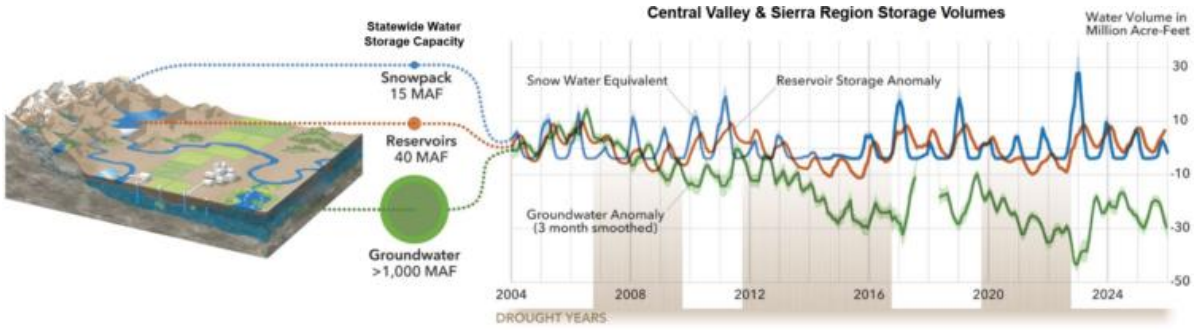
Groundwater's Interconnection to California's Water System

California's water system relies on three linked storage sources—snowpack, reservoirs, and groundwater—that respond to precipitation on different timelines. Snowpack stores water first and

releases it through spring and early summer, reservoirs capture and manage that runoff during dry months, and groundwater recharges more slowly over longer periods as the largest long-term reserve.

“It’s really one system that we need to be more effective in dynamically managing that,” Mr. Springhorn said.

The graphic below illustrates that relationship, showing the relative storage capacity of snowpack, reservoirs and groundwater. California, he said, receives an average of about 15 million acre-feet of runoff from melting snowpack each spring, while reservoirs hold about 40 million acre-feet of storage. Groundwater basins, he noted, offer far greater potential storage capacity.



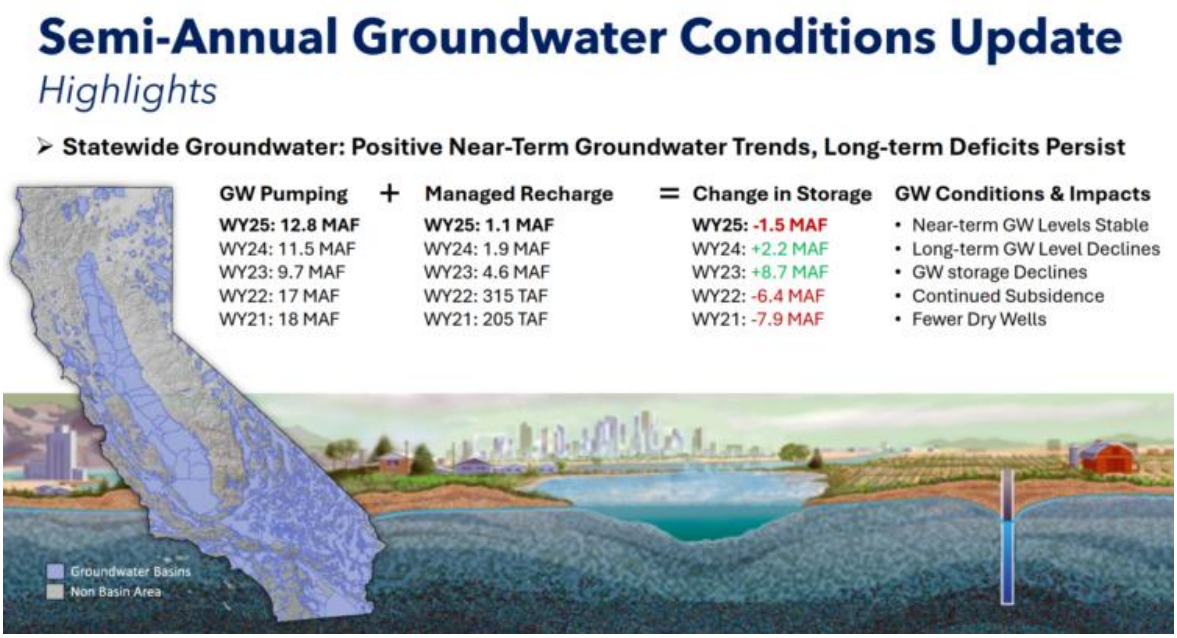
The graphic illustrates that snowpack typically peaks before reservoirs, which in turn peak before groundwater. “That’s showing the connectedness of water moving through the watershed above and below ground, but you can also see the critical, important nature of groundwater, that when we don’t have water on the surface, groundwater basins are our drought buffer,” he said.

Mr. Springhorn also pointed to sharp increases in groundwater pumping during the 2012–2016 and 2020–2022 droughts, followed by some rebound in the wetter years of 2017 and 2023, and noted those recoveries have not fully erased long-term losses. “What we have seen is that with each depletion of groundwater over the drought periods, there’s a persistent deficit, so we haven’t come all the way back,” he said. “So that’s really where we’re trying to work with locals to see what is that sustainable mix of projects and actions, recharge everything else to really have sustainability going forward.”

Mr. Springhorn noted that GSAs have nearly 2,000 projects and management actions listed in their adopted groundwater sustainability plans. “About 1000 of those projects are water supply or recharge focused,” he said. “If you add all those up, it’s over 4 million acre feet of potential, so we’re trying to support our local agencies in turning that potential and those possible projects into implemented projects.”

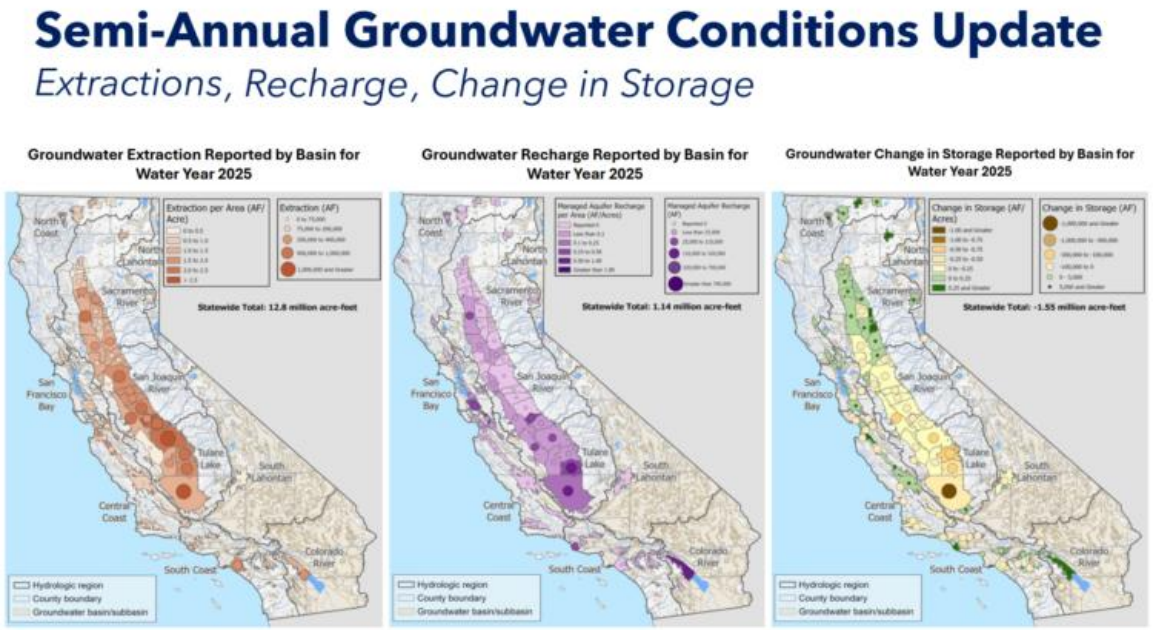
Report Highlights

Mr. Springhorn then highlighted several findings from the report. The latest data from groundwater sustainability agencies for Water Year 2025 shows groundwater pumping at just under 13 million acre-feet. That was slightly higher than the previous water year and well above 2023, which was exceptionally wet. GSAs also reported 1.1 million acre-feet of managed aquifer recharge. While that was below the wetter years of 2024 and 2023, Mr. Springhorn said it still reflects a broader trend of local agencies working to put water back into the ground.



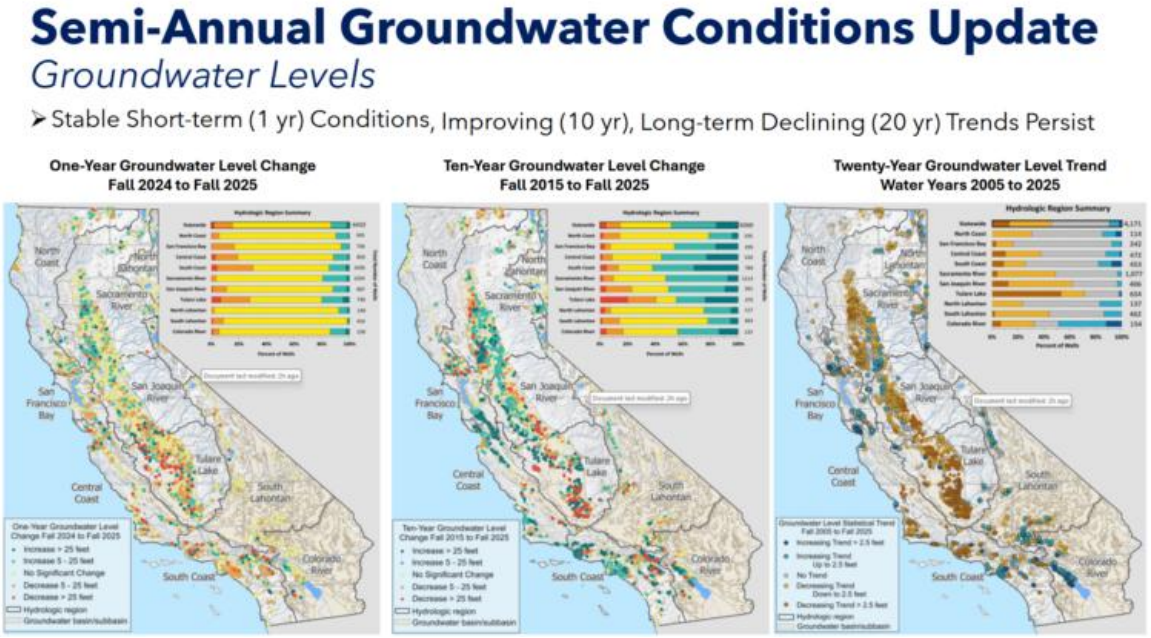
The report also showed a negative change in storage of about 1.5 million acre-feet — the first such decline in three years. “Near term groundwater levels in the last year are pretty stable,” Mr. Springhorn said. “Long term, we still see some groundwater level declines over longer periods of time. Groundwater storage declines, as you can see, we’ve had them in the past, and we had them again over the past water year. That has led to some continued subsidence, but there still are fewer dry wells than the highs of the last drought.”

Extractions are shown on the lower left. Most groundwater pumping occurs in the Central Valley, with about 83% of statewide groundwater extractions concentrated in the San Joaquin Valley.



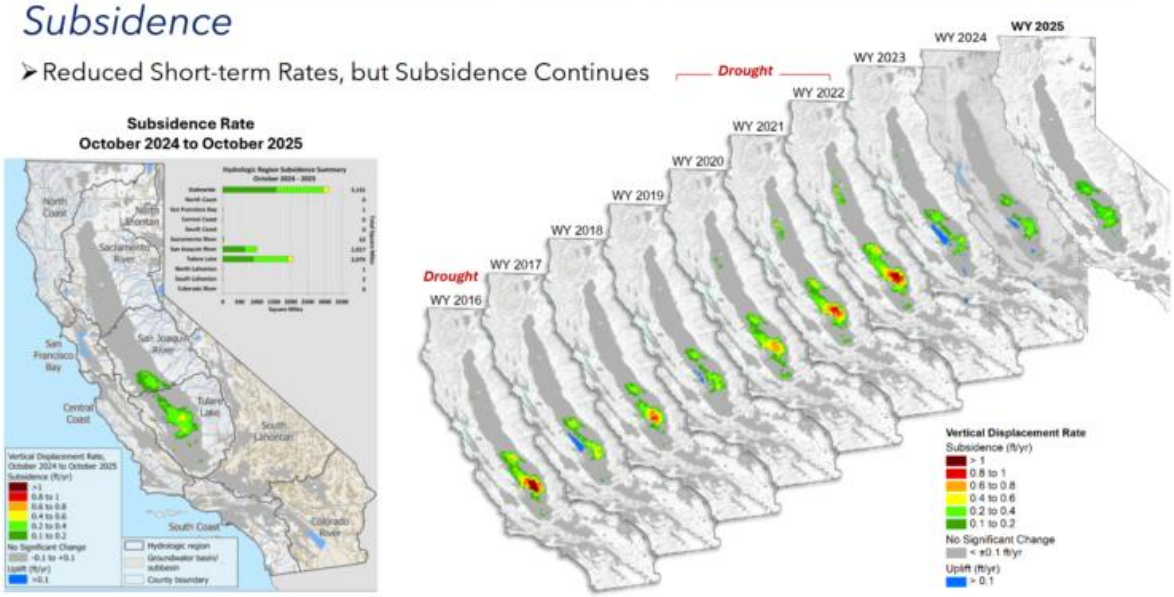
The middle graphic above shows the distribution of recharge across the state. Mr. Springhorn identified four main recharge areas this year: Santa Clara-Silicon Valley, the San Joaquin Valley, the Oxnard Plain-Ventura area and the Coachella Valley. He also said recharge efforts are increasing in the Sacramento Valley. The third graphic above shows changes in storage. Groundwater storage increased north of the Delta, but storage declined in the San Joaquin Valley, a shift Mr. Springhorn said was closely tied to water allocations.

The next set of graphics shows groundwater levels over one year, 10 years and 20 years. Mr. Springhorn said the data comes from about 9,000 wells monitored by DWR, groundwater sustainability agencies and the U.S. Geological Survey. In the graphics, green dots indicate groundwater-level increases of five to 25 feet or more, yellow indicates stable conditions, and orange and red show areas where groundwater levels are still declining. The graphic on the lower left shows changes from fall 2024 to fall 2025 and indicates that about 71% of wells were in stable condition in the near term.



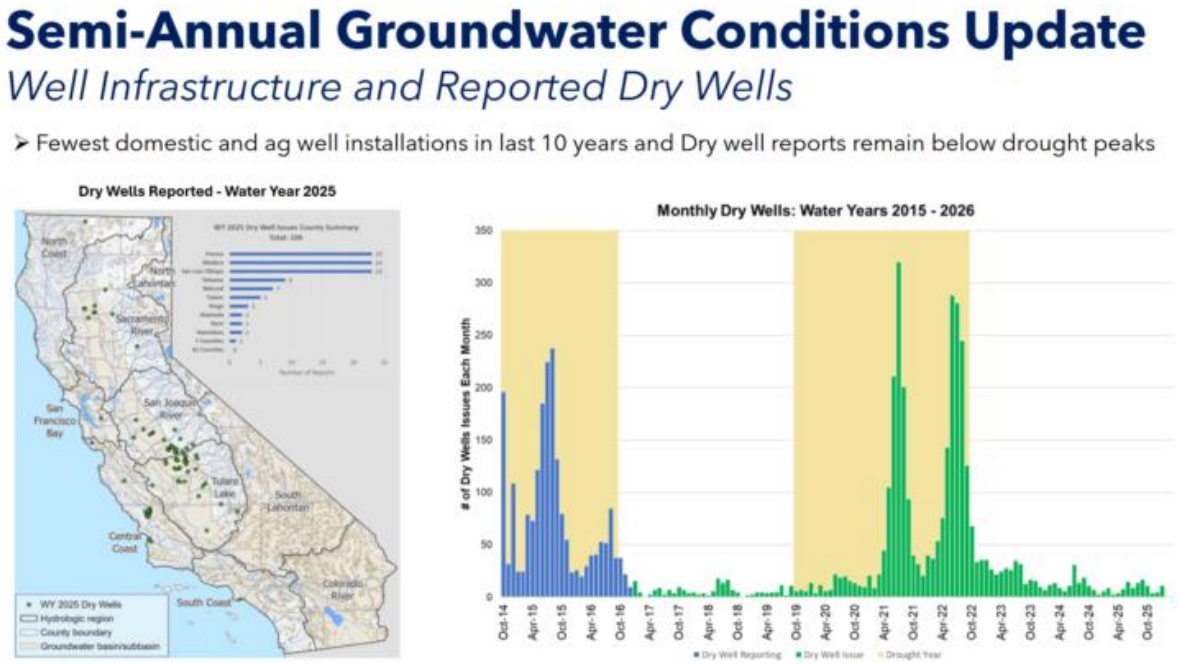
The middle graphic above compares conditions from fall 2015 to fall 2025 and shows more wells with gains than declines. “That’s an important timeline, because the fall of 2015 was when we were in the depths of that severe drought, that’s when SGMA came along, and so we have a decade of SGMA implementation, as well as Mother Nature providing quite a few wet years in that time frame, so it’s a combination of both.” Over the past 20 years, however, Mr. Springhorn said the data still shows a persistent long-term decline. In that graphic on the upper right, the orange and red areas represent groundwater declines of about 2.5 feet per year.

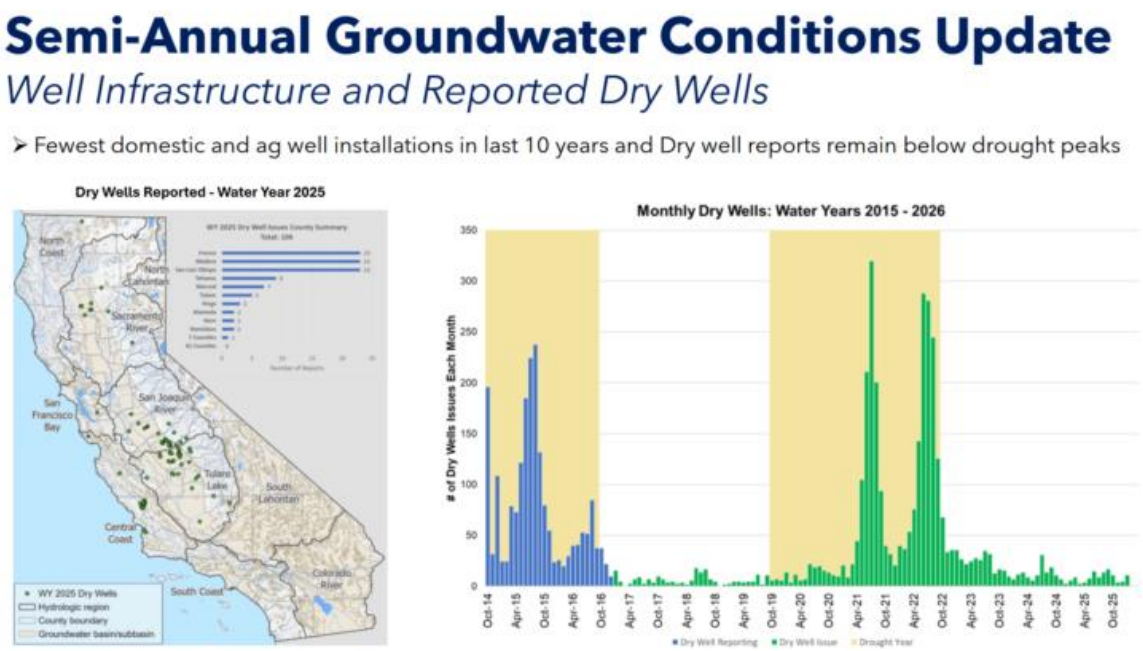
The slide shows a series of maps tracking subsidence conditions over the past 10 years, with two of the most prominent areas centered near Corcoran and El Nido in the San Joaquin Valley. Warmer colors indicate higher rates of subsidence over time. Blue shows limited uplift in wet years, while green, yellow and red indicate subsidence, with some areas reaching rates of up to one foot per year during severe droughts. The map on the left shows subsidence rates from October 2024 to October 2025.



“You can see there’s less blue on the map, so less rebound, a little bit more subsidence occurring because it was a bit drier year, lower allocations south of Delta,” said Mr. Springhorn.

The state expanded dry-well monitoring, outreach and response efforts during the last two droughts, and the current report shows relatively few reported dry wells compared with the peaks seen during those drought periods. That, he said, also reflects a growing role for local agencies and groundwater sustainability agencies in addressing dry wells as part of groundwater sustainability plan implementation.





“During the last two droughts, there was a large emphasis on state support for dry wells, and now we’re seeing more groundwater sustainability agencies and their community members working together to address these local impacts as they happen,” said Mr. Springhorn.

Groundwater Trading Workplan

Senior Engineering Geologist Andrew Morgan then briefed the commission on the groundwater trading workplan which was developed jointly by DWR, the State Water Resources Control Board, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and the California Department of Food and Agriculture in response to Action 3.6 of the Water Resilience Portfolio. That directive called on the four agencies to support local groundwater trading efforts while protecting vulnerable users.

The workplan was also shaped by the commission’s 2022 white paper, A State Role in Supporting Groundwater Trading with Safeguards for Vulnerable Users: Findings and Next Steps. It outlines an initial framework and possible state actions to support well-managed groundwater trading, with an emphasis on transparency and safeguards for vulnerable parties in early-stage markets.

Mr. Morgan said SGMA and its regulations do not explicitly address groundwater trading, but the practice generally falls under projects and management actions, or PMAs. Groundwater sustainability agencies are required to describe in their plans the PMAs they intend to use to reach sustainability goals. Groundwater trading, he said, is one optional tool — and not one every GSA will pursue. He said the workplan also addresses additional regulatory implications of groundwater trading under SGMA.

As an early step, the state is tracking emerging markets through the new PMA module on the SGMA data portal, which provides a centralized database of projects and management actions statewide. Mr. Morgan said the system currently lists nearly 2,000 PMAs. Mr. Morgan said groundwater sustainability agencies were required this April to include status updates on projects and management

actions in their annual reports. Using that latest data, he said, the figure identifies areas where groundwater trading could emerge in the future.

Basins shown with hatch marks indicate that at least one GSA has developed an allocation program. Basins shown in yellow are those where a market was proposed in the initial groundwater sustainability plan, suggesting allocation programs may still be under development and that trading could occur in the future. Mr. Morgan said two groundwater markets have been developed under SGMA — in the Kaweah Subbasin and at Fox Canyon GSA — but neither was active as of Water Year 2025.

The Groundwater Trading Accounting Platform was developed by the Environmental Defense Fund, the California Water Data Consortium and other third-party partners. DWR renewed funding in 2025 to support platform enhancements for another four years. Mr. Morgan said the tool is now being used in pilot studies across multiple basins. While it can be scaled for trading programs, he said accurate tracking of groundwater supply and use will be essential for any conjunctive use demand-management or groundwater trading program, which he described as an advanced form of groundwater demand management.

The interagency work team has also participated in several groundwater trading work groups and will continue engaging interested parties to better understand the status of local trading efforts and assess whether additional state action is needed. The team will also continue coordinating with partner agencies to advance the objectives of Action 3.6.

“However, at the same time, we have been prioritizing some broader issues, like subsidence, and soon interconnected surface water, and with like subsidence in particular, this may mean that some GSAs will need to reassess minimum thresholds and potentially their sustainable yields for the basin.,” he said. “I highlight this because the sustainable yield really is the basis for groundwater trading, so we can’t get necessarily too far ahead on that, but that being said, you know, our next steps will be guided primarily by feedback from the SGMA community, what those needs are, and balancing those other broader priorities of our program.”.

Subsidence BMP

Shane Edmunds, a supervising engineering geologist in DWR’s SGMA program, then briefed the commission on the subsidence BMP.

BMPs, or best management practices, are developed under the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act to support SGMA implementation. The department is authorized under the California Water Code to produce BMPs for that purpose. The subsidence BMP is the eighth DWR has developed under SGMA. With more than six feet of subsidence having occurred since SGMA was enacted in 2015, the BMP is intended to renew focus on subsidence management.

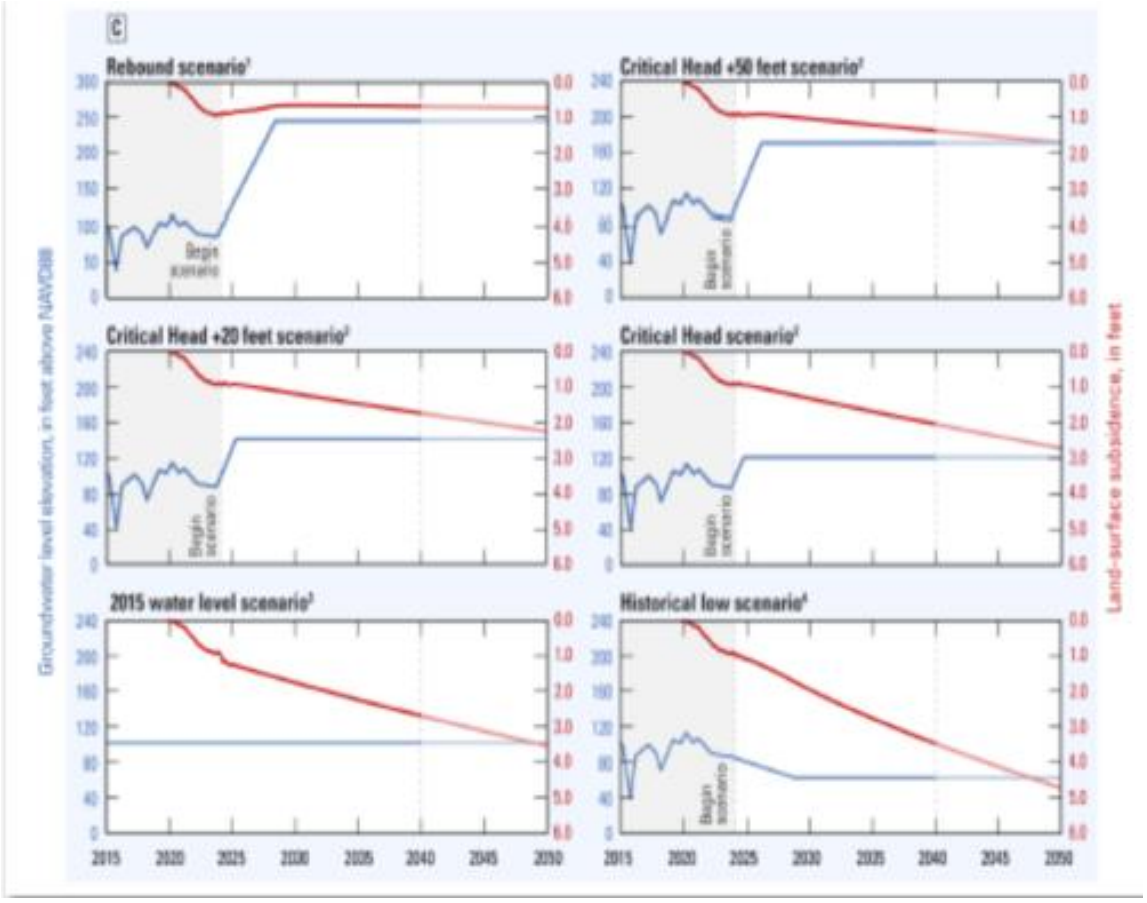
The first draft of the subsidence BMP was released in July 2025. After public comments were reviewed and incorporated, the final version was released in January 2026.

BMP Highlights

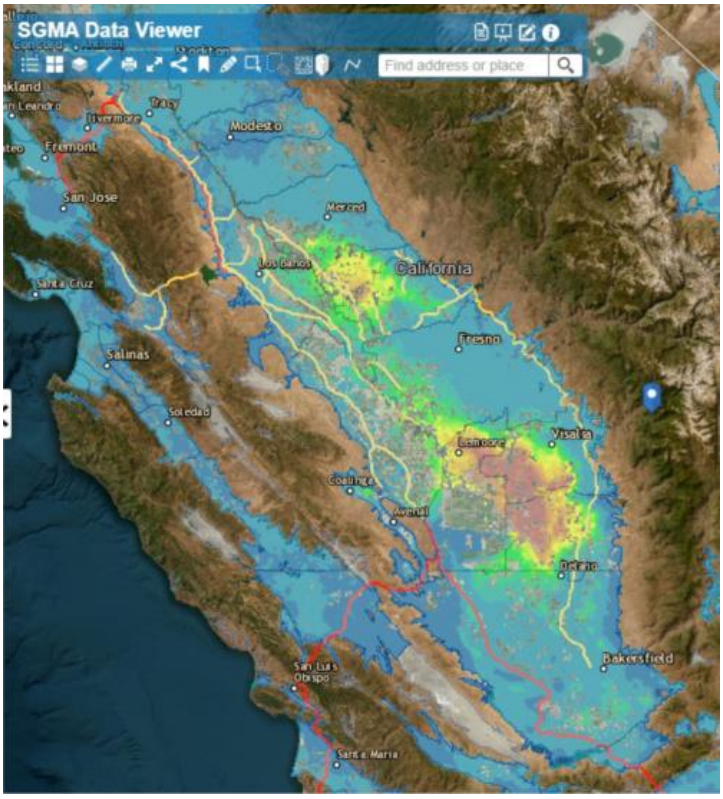
Critical head is a central concept in the subsidence BMP; it refers to the estimated groundwater level below which inelastic, or irreversible, subsidence can occur. The threshold is used to help determine how subsidence can be avoided or minimized.

The BMP outlines three methods GSAs can use to estimate critical head for subsidence management: trend-based, empirical and modeling approaches. "The BMP itself recommends that if you want to avoid or minimize subsidence, which is one of the intents of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act, you really need to raise your groundwater levels as rapidly as possible at or above that critical head level," said Mr. Edmunds.

Mr. Edmunds said the BMP shows that groundwater-level management directly affects how much subsidence may occur in the future. The slide presents multiple groundwater management scenarios and the resulting levels of subsidence that could occur in a basin.



The BMP also addresses infrastructure risks associated with subsidence. The map on the slide shows subsidence data across the state, with hotter colors indicating higher levels of subsidence. Yellow and red lines mark federal and state water conveyance facilities. In areas where subsidence overlaps with infrastructure, the BMP identifies categories of infrastructure and recommends that GSAs coordinate with the entities responsible for operating and maintaining those systems.



"When they're thinking about subsidence targets, GSAs need to be thinking about what are the impacts on that infrastructure that they should be managing the basin to avoid, and also be trying to estimate future subsidence near infrastructure, and then in those areas, GSAs are recommended in the BMP that they consider managing water levels at or above that critical head level," said Mr. Edmunds.

DWR Actions Supporting BMP Implementation

On March 10, DWR began implementing the subsidence BMP by meeting with groundwater sustainability agencies in areas experiencing subsidence to discuss how the guidance is affecting basin management. Mr. Edmunds said the outreach is being carried out in coordination with the State Water Resources Control Board because groundwater sustainability plans across the state remain in different stages, with some approved, some incomplete and some deemed inadequate. "We are working with the board on this because SGMA is a law that requires each of our agencies to have our role under SGMA, so we are working with the board on implementation of the subsidence BMP," said Mr. Edmunds.

Mr. Edmunds said the department recognizes that subsidence management is challenging and has been expanding support to help local agencies better understand basin conditions. DWR has been holding in-person meetings with individual basins to review existing subsidence conditions, discuss actions already underway and identify additional steps to minimize or avoid further subsidence.

Those basin-specific meetings are also intended to strengthen coordination between adjacent subbasins. Mr. Edmunds said DWR plans to hold regional meetings in the fall because subsidence often extends beyond basin boundaries, making cross-basin coordination critical.

Newly installed equipment from the California Department of Water Resources' Sustainable Groundwater Management Office to enhance the monitoring and understanding of land subsidence in California. The newly installed GPS station and remote sensing calibration equipment are firmly anchored into the ground to ensure precise positioning and detect vertical movement of the Earth's surface. Photo taken July 2, 2025 by Nick Shockey / DWR

DWR is also developing additional tools to support implementation.

- The department has been working to improve InSAR data, the remote sensing information used to measure subsidence and changes in land-surface elevation. Mr. Edmunds said earlier versions contained significant coverage gaps, shown as white areas on the map, which limited

their usefulness for GSAs. He said DWR has been working with a vendor to improve the dataset and has filled in many of those gaps, expanding statewide coverage for both agencies and the public.

- DWR is also installing new monitoring stations to measure subsidence. The stations use continuous GPS technology to provide real-time subsidence monitoring. The department now has 32 sites statewide to help fill data gaps and support comparison with InSAR results, and is working with GSAs and local agencies to identify locations for 12 more sites expected to be installed this year.
- Lithology data is also included in the SGMA Data Viewer where available. The lithologic logs, drawn from well completion reports, show subsurface layers such as clay, sand and gravel, helping users better understand groundwater levels, subsidence and subsurface conditions at a given location.
- The Bulletin 118 2025 update also includes an appendix on land subsidence. Mr. Edmunds said DWR has released models for 50 locations statewide that the public can use to project future subsidence at those sites.
- DWR's Sustainable Groundwater Management Office also continues supporting GSAs through financial assistance and facilitation services, including written translation, verbal interpretation, meeting facilitation and technical support.

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