

# THE FUTURE OF GROUNDWATER MANAGEMENT IN CALIFORNIA

Thomas Harter<sup>1</sup>

In the midst of a major drought, California Governor Jerry Brown signed what is perhaps the most significant legislative water initiative in California in half a century: the [Sustainable Groundwater Management Act of 2014 \(SGMA\)](#). The act consists of three legislative bills, [Senate Bill SB 1168 \(Pavley\)](#), [Assembly Bill AB 1739 \(Dickinson\)](#), and [Senate Bill SB 1319 \(Pavley\)](#). The [legislation](#) provides a framework for long-term sustainable groundwater management across California. Under the roadmap laid out by the legislation, local and regional authorities in medium and high priority groundwater basins will form Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs) that oversee the preparation and implementation of a local Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP).

Local stakeholders have until 2017 to organize in Groundwater Sustainability Agencies. Their Plans will have to be in place and implementation begun sometime between 2020 and 2022. GSAs will have until 2040 to achieve groundwater sustainability.

At <http://groundwater.ucdavis.edu/SGMA>, the UC Cooperative Extension Groundwater Program will provide comprehensive, up-to-date resources for further information related to the implementation of this important legislation, including links to webinars, factsheets, frequently asked questions, etc.. Some examples follow here:

- [SGMA Factsheet](#), ACWA
- [SGMA Frequently Asked Questions](#), ACWA
- [Implementation Deadlines](#)
- [Comparison chart: AB3030 Groundwater Management vs. SGMA](#)
- [Outline of the SGMA](#) (Downey-Brand)
- [Outline of the SGMA](#) (Brown-Hyatt-Farber-Schreck)
- [DWR Basin Prioritization Map for the CASGEM program](#)
- [CWF Groundwater Information Bank](#)
- [State of California Groundwater portal](#)
- [DWR Groundwater Information](#)
- [Calendar: Groundwater Workshops, Webcasts, Conferences](#)
- [Groundwater in the News - a 2014 digest](#)
- [Association of California Water Agencies \(ACWA\): Recommendations for Achieving Groundwater Sustainability](#)
- [California Water Foundation \(CWF\): Recommendations for Sustainable Groundwater Management](#)
- [Groundwater Resources Association: Modernizing California's Groundwater Management](#)

**Key Words: groundwater, overdraft, drought, land subsidence, water rights, management, regulations, wells.**

---

<sup>1</sup>T. Harter (thharter @ucdavis.edu), UCCE Groundwater Hydrology Specialist, Department of Land, Air, and Water Resources, Veihmeyer Hall, Davis, CA 95616. **In:** Proceedings, 2014 California Alfalfa, Forage, and Grain Symposium, Long Beach, CA, 10-12 December, 2014. UC Cooperative Extension, Plant Sciences Department, University of California, Davis, CA 95616. (See <http://alfalfa.ucdavis.edu> for this and other Alfalfa Symposium Proceedings.)