



ARVIN-EDISON WATER STORAGE DISTRICT

June 18, 2019

RE: SUSTAINABLE GROUNDWATER MANAGEMENT ACT UPDATE

Dear Landowner or Water User:

The Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) is upon us. The saving grace with SGMA is that local agencies are provided an opportunity to develop the rules under which we must operate and define what would constitute "significant and unreasonable" groundwater conditions locally as well as basin-wide. SGMA essentially requires agencies to balance water supplies and water demands while ultimately maintaining sustainable groundwater conditions by 2040 and beyond.

Arvin-Edison Water Storage District's (AE) initial SGMA Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) Chapter for its service area, which is being developed in conjunction with the Kern Groundwater Authority Groundwater Sustainability Agency, will prioritize the construction of new **Projects** and investigate new water management **Programs** *before* implementing groundwater **Management Actions**.

Projects/Programs in AE's GSP Chapter are focused on fully utilizing AE's federal water supplies both within and outside of AE. The Projects/Programs currently include, but are not limited to, (1) development of additional recharge sites (i.e., increases supply but also decreases demand); and (2) expansion of in-lieu deliveries (i.e., reducing groundwater extractions during wet periods by providing surface water deliveries). In fact, in partnership with Kern Delta Water District, AE recently purchased 150 acres that was historically a vineyard property and the districts are planning to jointly develop the property into recharge basins. The property is located

near the adjoining district boundaries where groundwater levels have consistently declined over time.

Management Actions will be part of the AE GSP Chapter that will provide for the flexibility and future ability for AE to reduce demand and potentially place restrictions on overall water use (i.e., an allocation system for both groundwater and surface water users). That being said, there remains significant data gaps across the basin and a multitude of questions about any GSP-mandated reductions in light of current and future uncertainties (i.e., climate change, hydrologic time periods used for evaluation purposes, lack of basin-wide modeling calibration/validation, etc.).

Accordingly, AE is prioritizing the development of Projects/Programs over Management Actions in its GSP Chapter until questions/uncertainties are better understood, while also evaluating potential Project/Program costs and benefits.

Following are answers to frequently asked questions:

How will the state confirm SGMA compliance?

SGMA requires evaluation of six (6) sustainability indicators: "significant and unreasonable" lowering of water levels, reduction of groundwater storage, land subsidence, water quality degradation, surface water depletion and seawater intrusion.

For the AE GSP Chapter, the ultimate test will be the achievement of sustainable groundwater levels, which are also a proxy for groundwater storage and subsidence (surface water depletion and sea water intrusion are not of concern in our area). The sixth test, water quality, is still under evaluation but currently is not considered to be a controlling criterion. AE has established an initial monitoring network of fifteen (15) well sites that will track representative water levels relative to established *measurable objectives* (a target goal)

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and *minimum thresholds* (below which an undesirable result could occur). AE's monitoring network will be the first test for SGMA compliance (i.e., 40% of the wells are not to exceed the minimum threshold). If minimum thresholds are exceeded, AE must implement action(s) to remedy the situation.

A second and concurrent test will be based on a Kern County basin-wide condition (30% of the basin area or 3 adjacent management areas can't exceed minimum thresholds). If the basin fails this test, the state would designate the basin as probationary and state intervention could likely occur including taking local control of the basin. The basin does have the ability to perform adaptive management and justify changing its sustainability goals on five (5) year increments.

Who is responsible for SGMA?

Currently, AE is assuming responsibility for compliance with all SGMA-related regulations and associated management thereof including aggregation of necessary data within its service area (i.e., supply/demand info, data collection, advocacy, stakeholder outreach, etc.). It is noted that there are currently NO individual Landowner/Water User requirements or reporting necessary, except continuation of paying the normal assessment charges, cooperation with property access, and responses to any specific requests to support filling data gaps, as appropriate. However, additional Landowner/Water User reporting and information may be necessary in the future as we continue navigating this new regulation. Furthermore, SGMA costs to date (over \$2.6 million since 2014), are being absorbed and allocated within AE's general rate setting process; in the near future additional Proposition 218 elections may be necessary to increase assessments and thus continue this practice.

AE is engaged in basin-wide coordination efforts including specifically with agencies south of Kern River. AE has hosted multiple stakeholder workshops and presented SGMA updates on a monthly basis. Individual landowner engagement is highly recommended, and we value your feedback and constructive criticism. A draft GSP for public review followed by a public hearing is forthcoming in Summer/Fall 2019. The final GSP must be submitted to the state, in coordination with all other GSPs in the basin, by January 31, 2020!

You will continue to be informed of AE's efforts to comply with the SGMA regulations. In the interim, local agencies are now informed if new well permit applications are requested within the basin and therefore provides agencies an opportunity to comment on the permit application. In order to preserve AE's SGMA compliance efforts, for example with respect to achieving measurable objectives and minimum thresholds, future well permit applicants may receive a letter from AE with specific comments on assumptions being made and additional information related to potential SGMA-related issues. Please note that this comment letter does NOT imply a moratorium on drilling wells. The comment letter will merely act to protect AE and its Landowners/Water Users, while also reminding the well applicant of the new SGMA world and the potential actions that could be necessary in the future to achieve sustainability. A template copy of such letter is attached for reference.

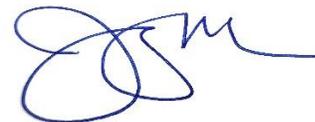
Thank you, and please call with questions, comments, or concerns.

Sincerely,



Edwin Camp
Board President

cc: Board of Directors
Scott Kuney, Young Wooldridge
Anona Dutton, EKI
All Employees



Jeevan Muhar, P.E.
Engineer-Manager



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Amy Rutledge
County of Kern, Department of Public Health Services
Environmental Health Division
2700 M Street Suite 300
Bakersfield, CA 93301

Subject: Comments on Water Well Permit Application No. XXXX

Dear Ms. Rutledge:

Per the *Overdrafted Basin Supplemental Well Application Process*, the Kern Groundwater Authority (KGA) has provided to Arvin-Edison Water Storage District (AEWSD) for review a copy of the well application materials for Permit/Well Number XXXX that were submitted by APPLICANT to the County of Kern Department of Public Health Services on DATE.

Based on AEWSD's review of said materials, we understand the following to be true:

Proposed Well Location:

Township/Range/Section:	TXXS/RXXE/SXX
Assessor's Parcel Number:	XXX-XX-XX
Latitude/Longitude:	X deg N, X deg W
Description:	"INSERT"

Proposed Well Design/Construction:

Total Depth (ft):	1,000
Screen/Perforation Depth (ft):	500 to 1,000
Seal Depth (ft):	"as directed"
Casing Diameter, nominal (in):	16

Proposed Well Use:

Intended Use:	Agricultural (irrigation) or industrial
Area to be Served by Well (acres):	375
Well Capacity (gpm):	2,200
Estimated Pumping Rate (gpd):	22,000
Proposed Pumping Schedule:	5 days per week
Estimated Annual Extraction Volume (AF):	32.42

Abbreviations:

deg = degrees, ft = feet, in = inches, gpm = gallons per minute, gpd = gallons per day, AF = acre-feet

Based on the above information, AEWSD has the following specific comments related to this Water Well Permit Application No. XXXXX:

1. The Estimated Annual Extraction Volume (32.42 AF) is inconsistent with the estimated pumping rate (22,000 gpd) and proposed pumping schedule (5 days per week).
2. The Area to be Served by Well (375 acres) appears inconsistent with the Estimated Annual Extraction Volume (32.42 AF), given typical crop water requirements, so we assume the well will be for Industrial use.

In addition, AEWSD has the following general comment related to implementation of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) within AEWSD: SGMA requires, among other things, the formation of Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs), the development of Groundwater Sustainability Plans (GSPs), and the establishment and achievement of Sustainability Goals by the 31 January 2040 SGMA implementation deadline. As a member of the KGA GSA, which is preparing a GSP for an area within Kern County that includes AEWSD service area (with the exception of the portion underlying the East Niles Community Services District and the White Wolf sub-basin), AEWSD has the authority to implement Projects and Management Actions identified within the GSP in order to achieve the Sustainability Goals defined therein. While the exact nature of the Projects and Management Actions that the KGA and AEWSD may choose to implement in the AEWSD service area is not known at this time, these actions may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Registration of water wells (California Water Code [CWC] Sec. 10725.6)
- Requiring water meters on wells (CWC Sec. 10725.8(a))
- Requiring individual well owners to file annual statements of groundwater extraction (CWC Sec. 10725.8(c))
- Acquisition of lands, easements, additional water supplies (CWC Sec. 10726.2(a), 10730.2), and water rights (Section 10726.2(b))
- Programs for voluntary fallowing of agricultural lands (CWC Sec. 10726.2(c))
- Well spacing requirements (CWC Sec. 10726.4(a)(1))
- Regulating, limiting, or suspending groundwater extractions, and establishment of groundwater extraction allocations, consistent with a city or county general plan (CWC Sec. 10726.4(a)(2))
- Transfers of groundwater allocations (CWC Sec. 10726.4(a)(3))
- Fees on groundwater extraction (CWC Sec. 10730 through 10730.6)

We hope that this information will help you understand the challenges we will face going forward and the tools that may be applied to achieve the long-term health and sustainability of our shared groundwater basin.

Please let us know if you have any questions regarding these comments.

Sincerely,

Management

cc: Landowner