

Excerpt from SGMA Legislation Definitions (Chapter 2)

Note: This is an excerpt from the 2014 Sustainable Groundwater Management Act and related statutory provisions; it includes 2015 amendments which are shown in underline and ~~strikeout~~.

Access the full legislation at this link: <https://water.ca.gov/-/media/DWR-Website/Web-Pages/Programs/Groundwater-Management/Sustainable-Groundwater-Management/Files/2014-Sustainable-Groundwater-Management-Legislation-with-2015-amends-1-15-2016.pdf>

CHAPTER 2. Definitions

10721. DEFINITIONS

10721. Unless the context otherwise requires, the following definitions govern the construction of this part:

- (a) “Adjudication action” means an action filed in the superior or federal district court to determine the rights to extract groundwater from a basin or store water within a basin, including, but not limited to, actions to quiet title respecting rights to extract or store groundwater or an action brought to impose a physical solution on a basin.
- (b) “Basin” means a groundwater basin or subbasin identified and defined in Bulletin 118 or as modified pursuant to Chapter 3 (commencing with Section 10722).
- (c) “Bulletin 118” means the department’s report entitled “California’s Groundwater: Bulletin 118” updated in 2003, as it may be subsequently updated or revised in accordance with Section 12924.
- (d) “Coordination agreement” means a legal agreement adopted between two or more groundwater sustainability agencies that provides the basis for coordinating multiple agencies or groundwater sustainability plans within a basin pursuant to this part.
- (e) “De minimis extractor” means a person who extracts, for domestic purposes, two acre-feet or less per year.
- (f) “Governing body” means the legislative body of a groundwater sustainability agency.
- (g) “Groundwater” means water beneath the surface of the earth within the zone below the water table in which the soil is completely saturated with water, but does not include water that flows in known and definite channels.
- (h) “Groundwater extraction facility” means a device or method for extracting groundwater from within a basin.

(i) “Groundwater recharge” or “recharge” means the augmentation of groundwater, by natural or artificial means.

(j) “Groundwater sustainability agency” means one or more local agencies that implement the provisions of this part. For purposes of imposing fees pursuant to Chapter 8 (commencing with Section 10730) or taking action to enforce a groundwater sustainability plan, “groundwater sustainability agency” also means each local agency comprising the groundwater sustainability agency if the plan authorizes separate agency action.

(k) “Groundwater sustainability plan” or “plan” means a plan of a groundwater sustainability agency proposed or adopted pursuant to this part.

(l) “Groundwater sustainability program” means a coordinated and ongoing activity undertaken to benefit a basin, pursuant to a groundwater sustainability plan.

(m) “In-lieu use” means the use of surface water by persons that could otherwise extract groundwater in order to leave groundwater in the basin.

(n) “Local agency” means a local public agency that has water supply, water management, or land use responsibilities within a groundwater basin.

(~~o~~) “Operator” means a person operating a groundwater extraction facility. The owner of a groundwater extraction facility shall be conclusively presumed to be the operator unless a satisfactory showing is made to the governing body of the groundwater sustainability agency that the groundwater extraction facility actually is operated by some other person.

(~~e~~) “Owner” means a person owning a groundwater extraction facility or an interest in a groundwater extraction facility other than a lien to secure the payment of a debt or other obligation.

(~~p~~) “Personal information” has the same meaning as defined in Section 1798.3 of the Civil Code.

(~~r~~) “Planning and implementation horizon” means a 50-year time period over which a groundwater sustainability agency determines that plans and measures will be implemented in a basin to ensure that the basin is operated within its sustainable yield.

-(~~s~~) “Public water system” has the same meaning as defined in Section 116275 of the Health and Safety Code.

(~~s~~) “Recharge area” means the area that supplies water to an aquifer in a groundwater basin.

-(~~t~~) “Sustainability goal” means the existence and implementation of one or more groundwater sustainability plans that achieve sustainable groundwater management by identifying and causing the implementation of measures targeted to ensure that the applicable basin is operated within its sustainable yield.

(~~u~~) “Sustainable groundwater management” means the management and use of groundwater

in a manner that can be maintained during the planning and implementation horizon without causing undesirable results.

(~~v~~w) “Sustainable yield” means the maximum quantity of water, calculated over a base period representative of long-term conditions in the basin and including any temporary surplus, that can be withdrawn annually from a groundwater supply without causing an undesirable result.

(~~w~~x) “Undesirable result” means one or more of the following effects caused by groundwater conditions occurring throughout the basin:

(1) Chronic lowering of groundwater levels indicating a significant and unreasonable depletion of supply if continued over the planning and implementation horizon. Overdraft during a period of drought is not sufficient to establish a chronic lowering of groundwater levels if extractions and groundwater recharge are managed as necessary to ensure that reductions in groundwater levels or storage during a period of drought are offset by increases in groundwater levels or storage during other periods.

(2) Significant and unreasonable reduction of groundwater storage.

(3) Significant and unreasonable seawater intrusion.

(4) Significant and unreasonable degraded water quality, including the migration of contaminant plumes that impair water supplies.

(5) Significant and unreasonable land subsidence that substantially interferes with surface land uses.

(6) Depletions of interconnected surface water that have significant and unreasonable adverse impacts on beneficial uses of the surface water.

(~~x~~y) “Water budget” means an accounting of the total groundwater and surface water entering and leaving a basin including the changes in the amount of water stored.

(~~y~~z) “Watermaster” means a watermaster appointed by a court or pursuant to other law.

(~~z~~aa) “Water year” means the period from October 1 through the following September 30, inclusive.

(~~aa~~ab) “Wellhead protection area” means the surface and subsurface area surrounding a water well or well field that supplies a public water system through which contaminants are reasonably likely to migrate toward the water well or well field.