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UNITED WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
"Conserving Water Since 1927"

31 March 2016

California Department of Water Resources delivered by email to: SGMPS@water.ca.gov
P.O. Box 942836
Sacramento, CA 94236
Attn: Lauren Bisnett

Subject: Draft GSP Emergency Regulations - Public Comment

Dear Ms. Bisnett:

United Water Conservation District (UWCD) appreciates all of the effort the California Department of Water Resources has put into the development of the Draft GSP Emergency Regulations and the opportunity to comment on those regulations. Our general comments include:

- We suggest that the draft regulations be crafted to afford maximum flexibility for the local Agency to decide how to get to sustainability. In some sections, the draft regulations are too prescriptive and not all items apply to all basins. Allow the local Agency to determine what is material to their sustainability efforts.
- Perhaps some of the more prescriptive components (e.g., using chloride isocontours for assessing seawater intrusion) would be better placed in the Department's BMPs that will help guide an Agency's efforts in preparing a GSP.
- Keep the Plan to the core elements. Secondary items (e.g., lists of interested persons or parties, Communication Plan, lists of well construction details and geophysical logs, etc.) can be made readily available on an Agency's GSP website. The Plan should not be the vehicle to share all of the information considered when developing the Plan. It is not necessary to provide a "data dump" in the Plan, however, we do agree that the information supporting the Plan should be made available via, for example, the Agency's website.
- Certain sections of the draft regulations focus on the water budget, but the development of the minimum thresholds and measurable objectives are less clearly tied to the water budget. Clarification on this point would be helpful.
- Language in the draft regulations imply that the Department will develop BMPs and that those BMPs are regulatory in nature (e.g., Section 352.4), which from our understanding, is inconsistent with the SGMA.

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- It is unclear what the draft regulations are expecting with respect to "sustainability goals". If the Agency establishes minimum thresholds to avoid significant and unreasonable effects and also measurable objectives, then where does the sustainable yield fit into the process? If the measurable objectives are being met, then isn't the basin condition sustainable by definition? (Page 25 / 354.24)?

We have also provided a few detailed comments for your consideration:

Page / Section	Comment
Page 8 / 352.6 (b)(2)	The DWR has all information on well construction in their database via the well construction forms required for all wells. This should not be a requirement to report all of this information within the GSP. IF the Agency has well construction data that DWR is not likely to have in their inventory (e.g., wells drilled prior well construction reporting requirements were enacted), then the Agency can merely transmit the information to DWR. It is unnecessary to include information on all of the wells in each 5 year update to the Plan. Let's try not to turn the actual Plan into a data dump. If DWR would like the information they don't have to be uploaded in some fashion, that is reasonable, but not as "mega-appendices" to the actual Plan. It is common to use other sources of subsurface data (e.g., oil and gas wells) to augment the development of hydrogeologic conceptual models. Well construction and use are of little interest to the conceptual model, but the geologic information is beneficial. Much of these data are already on the DOOGR website (and therefore already available to DWR). We suggest that these data be cited, but not required as part of the Plan since the State of CA already has this information.
Page 8 / 352.6 (b)(3)	This section implies that wells not constructed according to the DWR Bulletin 74-90 standards cannot be used in the groundwater monitoring program. In some locations, the wells may have been constructed prior to this bulletin. It seems unreasonable to preclude these wells if they are useful to the local Agency. Let the Agency assess which wells are useful to their basin-specific management strategies.
Page 9 / 352.6 (b)(3)(C-H)	The DWR already has this information (with the possible exception of *(G) Identification of aquifers monitored*. Why submit it to the Department, again?
Page 9 / 352.6 (b)(4)	Let the Agency vet which wells are useful to their basin-specific management strategies. If the Agency feels the absence of the data prescribed in the draft regulations is not detrimental to their groundwater management efforts, then why spend funds on additional monitoring wells. Secondly, downhole information about the well might be able to obtained (e.g., video log) and negate the need for new monitoring wells.
Page 10 / 352.6 (e)	While it is logical for groundwater models to developed using public domain, open source software, the Agency is responsible for determining how it will get to sustainability and should have the ability to select whichever tools (including modeling software) best serve their GSP.

Page 10 / 352.6 (f)	The references used in the creation of the GSP are a part of the data management system to be developed by the Agency. The Department can be provided access to the data management system. It is unnecessary to specifically send the references to the Department.
Page 17 / 354.10	The Agency is required to maintain a list of interested parties. This list could easily be included in the database management system. The list does not need to be included in the Plan.
Page 20 / 354.14 (c) (6)	It is suggested that all points of diversion of surface water (imported or not) be included in the conceptual model.
Page 22 / 354.18 (b)(2)	A 10 year time frame may or may not be representative of a "historical period" for establishing a water budget. Allow local Agency to select the time frame most appropriate to their area.
Page 22 / 354.18 (b)(3)	The use of the past 50-years of hydrological data as the baseline for the planning and implementation horizon may not be the most appropriate. This assumes that conditions over the past 50 years are indicative of the future, however, in many basins the hydrologic systems have been manipulated (e.g., surface water diversions, conjunctive use programs, managed aquifer recharge programs, etc.) so the conditions of 20-50 years ago are no longer applicable as baseline hydrology for future conditions. It may be more reasonable to use current hydrologic system (including the active manipulations listed above) as the baseline upon which a "most likely" future scenarios could be based.
Page 23 / 354.18 (c)	This section implies that a groundwater-surface water model is required to be developed. In simple basins, a model may not be required. Some basins have been managed without the benefit of a numerical model for many years. The requirement for the development of an integrated groundwater-surface water model is too prescriptive. The local Agency should decide which tool(s) allows them to sustainably manage the basin. In areas lacking the appropriate data, a five year time frame is not likely sufficient to collect the required information (e.g., surface water flows, groundwater extractions).
Page 28 / 354.28 (b)(3)	Using a chloride isocontour as the primary indicator of seawater intrusion seems overly restrictive. Surface geophysics, for example, could be used to infer the areal extent of seawater intrusion in the absence of a monitoring well network. Developing the data to defensibly create chloride isocontours in multi-aquifer systems would likely be expensive. We suggest that isocontours or *other methods* be deemed acceptable.

We appreciate your attention to our comments. If we can provide further clarification to assist with your review efforts, please do not hesitate to contact us. We look forward to working with the DWR in the management of groundwater resources in our region.

Sincerely,

UNITED WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Tony Morgan, PG, CHG
Deputy General Manager – Groundwater & Water Resources

Cc: General file
General Manager