

What People Are Saying About “The Need to Better Manage California’s Groundwater” Provided by the Groundwater Voices Coalition

Throughout California, stakeholders and media are supporting the call to fix the state’s broken groundwater management system.

A State Framework with Tools and Guidelines for Locals to Manage Groundwater is Needed

“The standard line in water politics is to call for local control over any new water rules. However, even among farmers, there is growing acknowledgements that local agencies may have neither the political will nor the technical resources to develop and enforce a sustainable groundwater management plan. And to protect the water that belongs to us all, they must.” ([San Francisco Chronicle editorial, 7/26/14](#))

“But now in California, there is a new recognition that, in the same way zoning might stop your neighbor from building a skyscraper next door, the water beneath real estate in some ways belongs to us all, just as the airspace above the ground does. When a farmer or anyone else drills down, ever-deeper, for water, in most cases it is not as if the water being tapped is from a reserve that exists only beneath one property. It’s likely in a pool that flows beneath many other landowners’ surfaces. Or from beneath public lands as well. In so many senses, that water belongs to all Californians, and ought to be well managed. But without the regulation that so many other states have, when the Groundwater Voices Coalition asked California voters it polled if they were concerned about the current method of resolving water disputes — litigation, often costly and lengthy — 57 percent said they were “very” or “extremely” concerned.” ([Los Angeles Times, 7/25/14](#)).

“In his California Water Action Plan published in January, Gov. Brown made addressing the state’s historic drought and lack of groundwater management a high priority. He promised to give local agencies the authority they need to protect a basin from overpumping. **Brown’s plan also echoes the need for possible state intervention.** ‘When a basin is at risk of permanent damage, and local and regional entities have not made sufficient progress to correct the problem, the state should protect the basin and its users until an adequate local program is in place,’ the governor’s plan states.” ([San Luis Obispo Tribune, 7/26/14](#)).

“Senate Bill 1168 by Sen. Fran Pavley, D-Agoura Hills, and Assembly Bill 1739 by Assemblyman Roger Dickinson, D-Sacramento, would provide a broad assessment of the more than 400 water basins, and authorize water agencies and districts to adopt sustainable management plans. Under the legislation, local agencies would have to create and approve the plans through a stakeholder process. Officials who oversee about 125 water basins representing about 90 percent of all groundwater pumping would need to develop a sustainability plan by 2020, and update them every five years. **Local districts and agencies**

would gain clear authority to monitor groundwater levels, quality, land subsidence and changes in the flow of nearby rivers and streams.” ([The Sacramento Bee](#), 8/3/14).

California’s Groundwater is in Jeopardy

“The need for groundwater management extends to all parts of the state, but not equally. In some groundwater basins, users already carefully track how much water they withdraw and return to the aquifer, giving them a basis for agreements among themselves about how to divide what is there and when to stop pumping until rains or water transfers recharge the underground supply. Other basins have no monitoring or measurement, leaving no way to balance long-term supply of, and demand for, water. Some basins are already subject to court adjudications, and some are at least partially contaminated. Legislation should take these differences into account.” ([Los Angeles Times](#), 8/4/14).

“Farm water pumping in this dramatic drought is causing the west San Joaquin Valley floor to sink, but forget about refilling those underground spaces when wet years return. There is no going back after a clay-laced underground collapses, says a new report warning California of irreparable harm from excessive pumping.” ([The Fresno Bee](#), 7/25/14)

“We know we’re going to get substantial pressure to address groundwater issues in our county, quite frankly we do not have the expertise sitting on this dais as is sitting in the audience. This will be a series of meetings that we have. A lot of it is to educate us on what are the problems. This is extremely complicated.” (Tulare County Supervisor Allen Ishida - [Visalia Times-Delta](#), 7/22/14)

“The study, based on NASA satellite data and released Thursday by the University of California, Irvine, shows that groundwater in the Colorado River basin has dropped by 40 million acre-feet over the past five years, the equivalent of two of the nation’s largest reservoirs. ‘If drought conditions like this continue, there is a possibility we will entirely deplete our groundwater storage,’ said researcher Stephanie Castle, the report’s author.” ([NBC News](#), 7/25/14)

Californians Support Action on Groundwater Management

“We’re all in the same boat here, and we have to work together on this... A lot of us need to pump groundwater to survive, but now we can’t just depend on that in the exact same way we always did before.” (Case Vlot, a Madera County farmer - [San Francisco Chronicle](#), 7/26/14)

“Californians want immediate action to protect the state’s dwindling groundwater supplies, according to a new poll paid for by the California Water Foundation and released today by the Groundwater Voices Coalition. Hispanic and Asian/Pacific Islander voters were also more likely than white voters to support ‘major changes now in the way we manage groundwater supplies.’ According to the survey, 85 percent of Hispanic voters supported ‘major changes,’ compared with 79 percent of Asian Pacific Islanders and 76 percent of whites. ([Central Valley Business Times](#), 7/17/14)

Groundwater is a Critical Resource

“If we aren’t managing it in a sustainable way, there are a lot people that will be vulnerable as a result,” says Moran. “We have cities throughout California that are 100 percent reliant on groundwater.” (Tara Moran, research associate, Stanford’s Water in the West – [KQED](#), 7/31/14)

“California’s agricultural economy overall is doing remarkably well, thanks mostly to groundwater reserves. **But we expect substantial local and regional economic and employment impacts.** We need to treat that groundwater well so it will be there for future droughts.” (Jay Lund, Director, UC Davis Center for Watershed Sciences – [The Salinas Californian, 7/22/14](#))

“This isn’t just an issue for San Bernardino, but many other cities depend up this basin for much of their water supply, including Redlands, Highland, Loma Linda, Rialto, Colton and Riverside.” (Bob Tincher, manager of water resources for San Bernardino Valley Municipal Water District – [Inland News Today, 7/21/14](#))