



University of California, Irvine



Water UCI

March 17, 2020

RE: A survey of California Groundwater Resilience in the light of SGMA implementation and conflict resolution techniques

Dear Colleague,

Water resources are subject to multiple pressures including climate change, population growth, increasing sectoral demands (e.g., agriculture, industry, tourism, energy, transport), and pollution. Will we have sufficient, dependable water in the future, and will we fairly and equitably manage competing and/or conflicting demands?

More specifically, groundwater is the most significant freshwater resource on Earth. However, it is still somewhat neglected by policymakers and ignored by the public (far from sight, far from mind!). A key issue is whether we will be able to manage our groundwater **resiliently** in California, *resilience being defined as the capacity to resist, absorb and recover when confronting disturbances and shocks*.

California has become quite sensitive to the issue of water resilience, especially groundwater. Recognizing, on the one hand, that water is a human right and is central to California's strength and vitality, and, on the other hand, that climate change has a profound impact on water, the Governor issued Executive Order N-10-19 in 2019 to prepare a water resilience portfolio to identify potential solutions to a range of water challenges including unsafe drinking water, major flood risks threatening public safety, severely depleted aquifers, and agricultural communities coping with uncertain water supplies.

Therefore, as a follow-up of the California-European Union workshop on Sustainable Groundwater Management and Conflict Resolution organized in June 2019 by Water UCI, an interdisciplinary center at the University of California, Irvine, and sponsored by the Orange County Water District, the Water Replenishment District of Southern California, and the Irvine Ranch Water District, and with further assistance from the State Water Resources Control Board, California Department of Water Resources, and the USGS California Water Science Center, the

same partners are interested in potentially organizing a workshop on “Strengthening California’s Groundwater Resilience in the context of Climate Change: Governance, Policy, and Economics”, to be held in June 2021. The object of this workshop would be to contribute to strengthening California groundwater resilience.

In preparation for this workshop, it is important to know where we stand in California. Hence, it was decided to organize a survey of the various California water and groundwater agencies and stakeholders, to get a snapshot of where these agencies and stakeholders stand in terms of water resilience, especially groundwater resilience, keeping in mind the implementation stages of SGMA (Sustainable Groundwater Management Act).

To that effect, we are addressing you the attached questionnaire, covering three subjects: Groundwater Resilience, SGMA implementation and Conflicts Resolution techniques. We hope that you will find time to answer as your opinion will be most important to help us prepare the 2021 workshop. A team comprised of representatives of Water UCI will analyze your answers and prepare a set of propositions to better focus the 2021 Workshop.

In order to have time to thoroughly work on your answers to the questionnaire and include their analysis in the preparation of the 2021 Workshop, we would appreciate it if you would complete the survey by April 20. Of course, your participation to this survey is on a voluntary basis and your identity won’t be revealed, unless you specifically state otherwise.

Your answers to the questionnaire should be sent to the following address:

[jfried@uci.edu](mailto:jfried@uci.edu)

with copy to

[ahutchinson@ocwd.com](mailto:ahutchinson@ocwd.com)

and

[feldmand@uci.edu](mailto:feldmand@uci.edu)

Thank you in advance for your participation

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jean Fried", is written over a light blue horizontal line. Below the signature, the name "Jean Fried" is printed in a small, black, sans-serif font.

Prof. Jean Fried, PhD  
Water UCI