



Media Release

2022 SAFER Aquifer Risk Map

Estimating Groundwater Quality Risk for Domestic Wells and State Small Water Systems – 2022 Update

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SACRAMENTO – The Safe and Affordable Funding for Equity and Resilience (SAFER) drinking water program is a set of tools, funding sources, and regulatory authorities to provide assistance to the nearly one million Californians who currently lack safe drinking water. The [Aquifer Risk Map](#) fulfills one of the requirements in Senate Bill 200 (Monning, statutes of 2019), and is a component of the SAFER program. The Aquifer Risk Map uses existing water quality data to estimate where domestic wells (serving less than five connections) and state small water systems (serving between 5 and 15 connections) are at risk of accessing groundwater that does not meet primary drinking water standards.

The Aquifer Risk Map is intended to inform Water Boards staff in the preparation of the annual Fund Expenditure Plan and to help identify at-risk state small water systems and domestic wells as required in SB 200. For the 2022 Needs Assessment, the SAFER program will combine the results of the Aquifer Risk Map with drought risk data from the Department of Water Resources to produce a combined risk assessment for state small water systems and domestic wells.

State small water systems and domestic wells are not regulated by the State of California. As a result, there is no statewide water quality database for these systems. The Aquifer Risk Map estimates groundwater quality accessed by these systems based on available groundwater quality data in the vicinity of these systems. The estimated water quality is not intended to be used as direct evidence of groundwater contamination in those areas. Initial funding efforts may be directed towards testing domestic wells and state small water systems before additional action is taken.

The Aquifer Risk Map was first released on January 1, 2021 and is updated annually. This is the first annual update of the map, and includes new data collected during the past year and methodology updates. The 2021 version of the map is now archived [here](#). Updates to the 2022 map include:

- Display water quality risk (“high”, “medium”, and “low” risk) for square mile sections instead of census block group risk percentile scores.
- Change definition of “recent” results from 2 to 5 years.



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- Incorporate water quality data from cleanup monitoring sites (GeoTracker data).
- Display drought risk data as Department of Water Resources (DWR) risk scores for self-supplied/rural communities and as current groundwater level conditions from DWR.
- Display race and ethnicity data and median household income (disadvantaged community status).

The [2022 map](#) is now available as a web tool along with a description of the [methodology updates for 2022](#). The map will continue to be updated annually. More information about the SAFER program, including the risk assessments for public water systems, state small water systems, and domestic wells, can be found [here](#).