

Groundwater Management and Drinking Water Well Principles and Strategies

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is the purpose of the groundwater management and drinking water well Principles and Strategies?

As part of Governor Gavin Newsom's Executive Drought Proclamation in April 2021, the Principles and Strategies are intended to help ensure that potential drought impacts on communities that rely on groundwater for drinking water are anticipated and proactively addressed.

The Department of Water Resources (DWR) and the State Water Resource Control Board (Water Board) have developed groundwater management Principles and Strategies to monitor, analyze and minimize the impacts on drinking water wells.

There are the six principles and 46 strategies which serve as a shared drought framework of State actions to benefit drinking water well users and for DWR and the Water Board to continue pursuing in drought and non-drought years.

Who are the Principles and Strategies intended for?

The Principles and Strategies provide the State, including DWR and the SWRCB, a guiding framework for near-term drought response and long-term resilience to support those Californians that rely on groundwater wells for drinking water. This State framework prioritizes the protection of public health and safety, as well as the preparation and mitigation for the effects of drought conditions over the long-term. The strategies include the identification of a lead State agency and many of strategies include coordination or engagement with drinking water well users, non-governmental organizations, local agencies, other interested parties, or members of the public.

1. Achieve Drinking Water Resilience: Implement ongoing drought planning and responses and other groundwater management programs to effectuate necessary changes with the goal to achieve drought resilience for drinking water well users.

2. Integrate Equity: Recognize equity needs to be integrated in drought-related planning processes to inform positive outcomes, as well as ensure there is equitable access to available drought assistance where barriers may exist for drinking water well users.

3. Address Underlying Challenges: Deliver targeted drought assistance by addressing the underlying challenges drinking water well users face to provide near-term relief, resolve fundamental issues, and anticipate and mitigate future drought impacts.

4. Lead with Best Available Data: Prioritize the alignment, centralization, and accessibility of available well data and information to clearly identify emerging and existing groundwater and drinking water issues for improved drought management.

5. Build Trusted Relationships: Emphasize that prioritizing and building trusted relationships with drinking water well users create opportunities for effective coordination, communication, and decision-making.

6. Implement Lasting Solutions: Recognize that there are no one-size-fits-all solutions to address drinking water well challenges and that solutions need to be specific, effective, and lasting with clear commitments to engage, empower, and support drinking water well users.

How has the public provided input on the Principles and Strategies?



The diagrams above show the total number of participants and comments received during the public engagement process to develop the Final Principles and Strategies.

In the process of developing the Principles and Strategies, the State hosted three listening sessions in June 2021 to gather early input from members of the public, interested parties, and groundwater and drinking water experts. In July 2021, a public workshop was held to report out on draft concepts shaped by the comments received in the early listening sessions.

The release of the draft Principles and Strategies included a formal 30-day public comment period and a public webinar. All listening sessions, the workshop, and webinar had live Spanish translation available and the draft written document was also translated into Spanish. Throughout this process, a total of 681 participated and 372 comments were received which helped shape the draft and final documents.



How do the Principles and Strategies relate to existing State regulatory and funding programs?

The Principles and Strategies serve as a framework to guide State actions related to drinking water well and groundwater management. This framework does not supersede existing State regulatory authorities and is intended to align with and complement existing State regulatory and funding programs, and the State's Water Resilience Portfolio.

Some strategies specifically highlight ongoing State regulatory and funding programs, where others may propose new emerging efforts that can be taken.

Additional Executive action, legislation, funding, and guidance may be required to fully implement these strategies. An implementation matrix accompanies the final Principles and Strategies to show how each strategy helps to monitor, analyze, and minimize drought impacts to drinking water well users, the nexus to existing programs and funding, new emerging efforts, and the lead State agencies, partner State agencies involved, and any materials or resources already available to the public.

More information on the groundwater management and drinking water well Principles and Strategies can be found at: <https://water.ca.gov/Programs/Groundwater-Management/Drinking-Water-Well>