

HHIA – Water & Utility Report for 2022.05.16 Meeting

Main San Gabriel Key Water Well Level updates:

**** Historic Low: 169.4 ft. (on 2018.11.21)**

Historic High: 295.30 ft. on 1983.07.20 (Since entry of judgment in 1973)

Current: (As of 2022.05.06), 185.0 ft. (62.65% to High).

Related link:

<http://www.watermaster.org/>

- **It's all about saving water usage**

Water cutbacks starting June 1, 2022

There are information spreading around regarding “Water Cutback” starting June 1, 2022, which will affect many LA & LA County cities and about 6 million residents; link like this one:

<https://techyinsight.com/which-southern-california-cities-face-water-cutbacks-on-june-1/>

which includes Hacienda Heights.

After speaking with three (3) water companies servicing HH, Rowland Water District, San Gabriel Valley Water Company, and Suburban Water System, all confirmed that HH is NOT affected by that ordinance on June 1, 2022 as yet. HH residents, however, are strongly recommended to follow “Twice-a-week” rule to conserve water; days of watering varies, such as “odd numbers on Monday & Thursday; even numbers on Tuesday & Saturday”. Will provide updates as regulations change.

Groundwater sustainability agency: groundwater extraction permit: verification.

AB 2201

California Assembly Bill

Assembly • May 11, 2022: In committee: Hearing postponed by committee.

Official Summary/Bill Text

Existing law, the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act, requires all groundwater basins designated as high- or medium-priority basins by the Department of Water Resources that are designated as basins subject to critical conditions of overdraft to be managed under a groundwater sustainability plan or coordinated groundwater sustainability plans by January 31, 2020, and requires all other groundwater basins designated as high- or medium-priority basins to be managed under a groundwater sustainability plan or coordinated groundwater sustainability plans by January 31, 2022, except as specified. Existing law authorizes any local agency or combination of local agencies overlying a groundwater basin to decide to become a groundwater sustainability agency for that basin and imposes specified duties upon that agency or combination of agencies, as provided. Existing law also authorizes the State Water Resources Control Board to designate a high- or medium-priority basin as a probationary basin under certain conditions for specified purposes.

This bill would prohibit a local agency, as defined, from approving a permit for a new groundwater well or for an alteration to an existing well in a basin subject to the act and classified as medium- or high-priority until it obtains a written verification, from the groundwater sustainability agency that manages the basin or area of the basin where the well is proposed to be located, determining that certain factors are present. The bill would prohibit a groundwater sustainability agency from providing the above-described written verification unless it determines that certain factors are present, including,

but not limited to, that the extraction by the proposed well is consistent with any sustainable groundwater management program established in any applicable groundwater sustainability plan adopted by that groundwater sustainability agency.

The bill would authorize a groundwater sustainability agency to impose a fee upon a local agency that does not exceed the reasonable cost of making the determinations required for a written verification, issuing the written verification, or both. The bill would also require a groundwater sustainability agency to post a notification of the well permit application on its internet website to allow the public to comment on the well permit application for at least 30 days before issuing the above-described determinations. By imposing additional requirements on groundwater sustainability agencies, the bill would impose a state-mandated local program.

This bill would exempt any well that provides less than 2 acre-feet of water annually for domestic use or any well used by a public water supply system from these provisions. The California Constitution requires the state to reimburse local agencies and school districts for certain costs mandated by the state. Statutory provisions establish procedures for making that reimbursement.

This bill would provide that no reimbursement is required by this act for a specified reason.

Statutes affected:

AB2201: 103 WAT

02/15/22 - Introduced: 103 WAT

03/17/22 - Amended Assembly: 10728 WAT, 103 WAT

04/27/22 - Amended Assembly: 10728 WAT

AB 2201: 103 WAT

Related link:

<https://fastdemocracy.com/bill-search/ca/20212022/bills/CAB00024536/>

State, Federal Agencies Announce Agreement with Local Water Suppliers to Improve the Health of Rivers and Landscapes

Published Date: 29 Mar 2022

MOU a Key Step in Years-Long Effort to Help Recover Salmon While Protecting Water Reliability

SACRAMENTO – State, federal and local water leaders announced broad agreement today on measures to provide additional water flows and new habitat to help improve conditions in the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta watershed.

The memorandum of understanding (MOU) signed today outlines terms for a transformational eight-year program that would provide substantial new flows for the environment to help recover salmon and other native fish, create new and restored habitat for fish and wildlife, and provide significant funding for environmental improvements and water purchases. It also outlines a governance and habitat monitoring framework with clear metrics and goals to allow state, federal and local partners to analyze progress, manage adaptively and decide whether the program should be continued, modified or ended after eight years.

“Since my first days in office, I have sought to reject old binaries and find new solutions to problems – we don’t have to choose between healthy ecosystems or a healthy economy, we can choose a path that provides for both,” Governor Gavin Newsom said. “This is a meaningful, hard-earned step in the right

direction. I am thankful to our partners on this historic agreement and look forward to continued collaboration as we adapt for the future.”

The state has been actively working with local water agencies since 2016 to develop enforceable agreements to provide additional river flows and new habitat to help change the trajectory of declining native fish species. Following the release of a framework document in February 2020, state agencies have continued to work with local water agencies to refine elements of agreements that would enable adaptive, holistic management and deliver environmental improvements more quickly than a regulatory proceeding that would likely be contentious.

“Today’s MOU is an important milestone, but there is much work ahead,” California Secretary for Natural Resources Wade Crowfoot said. “We’re committed to advancing these critical agreements because they hold promise to improve environmental conditions more quickly and holistically than regulatory requirements, while providing more certainty to communities, farms and businesses. The severity of this drought shows us how quickly we need to move and how much we can get done with a mutual commitment to increase flows, accelerate habitat restoration, and learn together what works best so that we can do more of it.”

“Extreme weather caused by climate change is wreaking havoc with California’s water supplies. By adaptively managing this complex system, the Voluntary Agreements speed up the delivery of additional water and critical habitat,” California Secretary for Environmental Protection Jared Blumenfeld said. “This agreement will move us away from ‘water wars’ of yesteryear, ushering in a new era of collaboration in the battle to fight climate change.”

“Today marks a key milestone in California water – a step that symbolizes the importance of working together to address the challenges that come with a changing climate,” said Reclamation Regional Director Ernest Conant. “Reclamation welcomes this partnership opportunity to move towards a more comprehensive approach to improving the health of the environment and water supply reliability for the cities, farms, and refuges we serve.”

The State Water Resources Control Board is required to update its Bay-Delta Water Quality Control Plan to protect native fish, wildlife and other “beneficial uses” of water, including municipal, domestic and agricultural water supplies.

The MOU signed today seeks to meet those objectives through an integrated program that includes habitat creation, new flows for the environment above existing regulatory requirements, funding for environmental improvements and water purchases, and a new, collaborative science program for monitoring and adaptive management.

Habitat creation would range from targeted improvements in tributaries to large landscape-level restoration in the Sacramento Valley. Improvements include creation of spawning and rearing habitat for salmon and smelt, completion of high-priority fish screen projects, restoration and reactivation of flood plains, projects to address predation, and fish passage improvements.

“Today’s action is a major step in significantly improving how we manage our water supplies to support our environment and all Californians,” said Jennifer Pierre, general manager of the State Water Contractors. “Our only path forward is together and the VAs create an appropriately sourced governance approach that will allow resource agencies, public water agencies and conservation groups to work together to better balance the environmental and economic needs of our State. We look forward to working with our partners and state leaders to move the VAs forward to achieve reliable water supplies for Californians and our ecosystems.”

“The program advanced today represents a fundamental change in how state agencies, federal agencies, public water agencies, and other interested groups approach efforts to protect the environment and provide water for cities, industries, and farms,” said Thomas Birmingham, general manager of Westlands Water District. “This program will take a comprehensive approach to restoring healthy rivers and ecosystems, improving the viability of native fish populations, and providing water supply reliability to communities and farms in nearly every region of the state. This is vitally important to California agriculture, which provides more than two-thirds of the nation’s fruits and nuts and more than one-third of the nation’s vegetables.”

“This is a critical milestone in our joint effort to develop a balanced and holistic watershed-wide approach to address the environmental and water reliability challenges we face in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta,” Metropolitan General Manager Adel Hagekhalil said. “But this is just the first step. We need to work collaboratively with all of our state, federal, environmental and water agency partners to ensure we have a comprehensive action plan that improves water reliability and delivers real results for the environment.”

“We look forward to the new collaborative governance and trust building that will occur through decision-making processes in the agreement, and appreciate the framework to balance beneficial water needs for fish, farms, communities and the environment,” said Thad Bettner, general manager of Glenn-Colusa Irrigation District.

“With one of the driest years among the driest decade on record, we have an opportunity to advance a transformational new approach to water management in the Delta and our rivers. Through a process of voluntary agreements, we have a new way of doing business, with a collaborative and innovative spirit to work hard for healthy rivers, farms, and landscapes -- all for the benefit of people, communities, fish and wildlife,” said David Guy, president of the Northern California Water Association.

Local water agency managers signing the MOU have committed to bring the terms of the MOU to their boards of directors for their endorsement and to work to settle litigation over endangered species protections in the Delta.

Signatories to the agreement also committed to finalize the following elements:

- Up to 824,000 acre-feet of additional flow to and through the Delta in the ecologically important window of January through June. Target flow volumes vary depending upon how wet or dry a year is, and flows made available under the agreement will be above current regulatory conditions.
- 20,000 acres of additional floodplain habitat.
- 20,000 acres of rice cropland inundated in ways to improve generation of microscopic plants and animals that provide fish food.
- Over 5,000 acres of additional tidal wetlands and associated floodplain.
- Nearly 3,300 acres of additional spawning, and instream and floodplain juvenile rearing habitat.
- A new state multi-disciplinary restoration unit to accelerate permitting and implementation of habitat projects.
- Annual reports informing adaptive management and describing status and trend of native fish populations and whether commitments by voluntary agreement parties are being met.
- Triennial reports and public workshops in years three and six of the agreement to analyze progress.
- A “red,” “yellow,” or “green” decision by state water quality regulators in year eight to determine if the voluntary agreements are achieving ecological objectives and should be continued, modified, or ended.

Water agencies in the Bay-Delta watershed that do not sign onto the approach outlined in the MOU would need to comply with regulatory requirements established by the State Water Board.

Implementation of the agreements outlined in the MOU is estimated to cost \$2.6 billion, to be shared by water users and the state and federal governments. Water agencies will self-assess fees to support implementation of the voluntary agreements. Water users and the state will make flows available through a combination of reduced diversions, year-by-year purchases of water, long-term or permanent purchase of water, and voluntary fallowing of agricultural or pasture lands.

Related link:

<https://resources.ca.gov/Newsroom/Page-Content/News-List/Agreement-with-Local-Water-Suppliers-to-Improve-the-Health-of-Rivers-and-Landscapes>

Continuing drought prompts re-adoption of emergency curtailment regulation in Russian River

State Water Board revises and renews existing regulation

May 10, 2022 Contact: Ailene Voisin, Information Officer

SACRAMENTO – With California experiencing one of the driest winters on record and water in the Russian River expected to again reach critically low levels due to a third consecutive year of drought, the State Water Resources Control Board today readopted an emergency regulation authorizing the Division of Water Rights to curtail diversions in Sonoma and Mendocino counties to protect threatened drinking water supplies and migrating fish.

Per the renewed regulation, curtailment orders will be issued based on water supply shortage or when insufficient flows imperil fish in the Lower Russian River watershed. As of May 5, both Lake Mendocino and Lake Sonoma were below 60 percent of storage capacity.

Approximately 2,000 right holders are expected to receive the orders although some might not be directed to curtail their diversions until later in the summer. Water users will be required to track their water availability and curtailment status on the “Curtailment Status List” on the Russian River Drought website.

“Climate change-induced drought conditions are not easing, making it critical that we continue taking actions to protect the state’s diminishing water supply,” said Erik Ekdahl, deputy director of the Division of Water Rights. “If we didn’t issue curtailments last year, Lake Mendocino might have gone completely dry. So, while we understand that curtailments can impose some hardship, failing to maintain sufficient water levels poses potential harm to human health, fish and the environment.”

The updated regulation includes a refined water availability method, protections for fish habitat in certain Lower Russian River tributaries and a pathway for a voluntary savings program in the upper watershed that would allow right holders to reduce their water use in lieu of curtailments.

The Russian River starts in Mendocino County and flows 110 miles south through Sonoma County before entering the Pacific Ocean. Water stored in Lake Mendocino, a reservoir north of Ukiah, is released downstream to maintain flows in the upper section

of the river. The supplemental water from the lake protects multiple fish species and municipal and agricultural uses and, during drought, accounts for nearly all the water in the river.

Sonoma and Mendocino were the first counties placed under a region-specific drought state of emergency on April 21, 2021, by Gov. Gavin Newsom. To address acute drought impacts, the proclamation called on the State Water Board to consider modifying reservoir releases, limiting and curtailing diversions in the Russian River watershed when necessary to ensure the availability of drinking water.

Related link:

<file:///C:/Users/Ted/Downloads/pr05102022-russian-river-emergency-curtailment-regs-readoption.pdf>

Southern California Gas

Renewable Natural Gas Continues to Flow at SoCalGas Fueling Stations

More than 275,000 metric tons of CO2 emissions avoided over last three years

May 12, 2022

SoCalGas has renewed our program to supply renewable natural gas (RNG) to all 32 of our fueling stations, along with six in the San Diego area, signing three-year contracts with suppliers U.S. Gain and Element Markets as demand continues to grow.

In April 2019, we began replacing traditional compressed natural gas at fueling stations with RNG to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions and meet California’s climate goals. RNG is produced by capturing methane emissions from organic waste materials. Depending on the source of organic waste, RNG can be carbon negative because it captures more greenhouse gases than it emits. Since September 2020, the RNG delivered at the 38 fueling stations is considered carbon negative by the California Air Resources Board (CARB).

The results have been remarkable: RNG delivered at the 38 fueling stations helped avoid approximately 275,000 metric tons of CO2 emissions over the last three years – equivalent to eliminating nearly 31 million gallons of gasoline burned, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s Greenhouse Gas Equivalencies Calculator.

“Our first three years dispensing RNG at our fueling stations have been a dramatic success, both in terms of moving forward toward our climate goals by reducing greenhouse gas emissions, but also in demonstrating the growing demand for clean RNG in our region,” said Elsa Valay-Paz, SoCalGas vice president of gas acquisition. “We dispensed 46 percent more RNG the last year than we did during the first two years, and we expect demand to continue to grow.”

The new three-year renewal continues our partnership with U.S. Gain. SoCalGas signed a new contract with Element Markets to provide RNG as a second partner.

“We’re honored to continue working with SoCalGas to build on the success of the last three years, connecting their fleet with RNG in support of their decarbonization journey,” said Bryan Nudelbacher, U.S. Gain’s Director of Business Development. “Successful programs like this can help accelerate RNG adoption across industries, applications and geographies to reduce emissions and make a real impact on climate change.”

“We’re pleased to have been chosen to partner with SoCalGas as they explore and expand the use of low carbon RNG,” said Angela Schwarz, CEO of Element Markets. “As the leading independent marketer of RNG in the U.S. and, with our recent merger with Bluesource, the largest marketer and originator of carbon and environmental credits in North America, we welcome the opportunity to grow in our role a trusted provider of decarbonization solutions that progress sustainability mandates and voluntary goals.”

Last year, we were proud to receive the 2021 NGV Achievement Award in the Utility Leadership for outstanding contributions to the advancement of natural gas as a transportation fuel, in part for our efforts at fueling stations.

RNG is an important tool in our efforts to reach both California’s and the company’s climate goals. In 2019, we established benchmarks including delivering 20 percent renewable natural gas (RNG) by 2030. Last year, we expanded our sustainability goals further, setting our aims on achieving net zero greenhouse emissions in our operations and the energy we delivers by 2045.

And in October, we shared its Clean Fuels Study, a comprehensive technical analysis that examines how to achieve California's carbon neutrality goals through a more integrated, reliable, and affordable energy system with a diverse array of clean fuels that includes RNG and hydrogen.

For more information about renewable natural gas and how it fits into our sustainability efforts, please visit <http://www.socalgas.com/aspire2045>.

Related link:

<https://newsroom.socalgas.com/stories/renewable-natural-gas-continues-to-flow-at-socalgas-fueling-stations>

Report by ***Ted Chang***
HHIA Board Director, Water & Utility