



CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES

## SUSTAINABLE GROUNDWATER MANAGEMENT OFFICE

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May 17, 2024

Sierra Ryan  
Santa Cruz Mid-County Basin – Plan Manager  
5180 Soquel Drive  
Soquel, CA 95010  
[BasinPOC@midcountygroundwater.org](mailto:BasinPOC@midcountygroundwater.org)

RE: Review of Annual Report for the Santa Cruz Mid-County Basin, Water Year 2023

Dear Sierra Ryan,

As the basin point of contact for the groundwater sustainability plan (GSP) in the Santa Cruz Mid-County Basin (Basin), this letter is to inform you that the Department of Water Resources (Department) has completed the review of the annual report for the Basin for Water Year 2023 and determined that no further information or action is required at this time.

The Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) requires on every April 1 following the adoption of a GSP that an annual report be submitted to the Department providing updated information about the Basin (Wat. Code § 10728). The required contents of annual reports are further specified in the GSP Regulations (23 CCR § 356.2). Once an annual report has been submitted, the Department is required: to notify the submitting agency of receipt within 20 days, review the information to determine whether the basin's GSP is being implemented in a manner likely to achieve its established sustainability goal, and notify the submitting agency in writing if additional information is required (23 CCR § 355.8).

The submitted information appears to largely satisfy the requirements of the GSP Regulations (23 CCR § 356.2) and no additional information is required at this time. The Department previously conducted a comprehensive evaluation of the GSP for the Basin and issued an assessment determining that the GSP is likely to achieve the sustainability goal for the Basin. The Department has determined that for the period of time covered in the annual report, it appears the GSP continues to be implemented in a manner consistent with achieving the Basin's sustainability goal as described in the GSP. The Department reached this conclusion after reviewing information in the annual report, any public comments submitted to the Department regarding this annual report, and other relevant information regarding Basin conditions available to the Department.

In making this determination, the Department recognizes that achieving SGMA's goal of sustainable groundwater management is a significant and new statutory and policy

directive. GSAs must and will continue to improve their understanding of and ability to manage their Basin as GSP implementation under SGMA progresses. Consequently, the Department's review of this and other annual reports noted information contained in the annual report may not precisely match the schedules, projections, or estimates reported in the initial GSP as approved by the Department because of numerous factors over which the GSA has varying levels of knowledge and control (e.g., annual hydrology, actions of other private or public entities, unforeseen delays or events, and unexpected physical or geologic processes, etc.).

The approved GSP for the Basin is still in the early years of its implementation and it is State policy that sustainable groundwater management is best achieved locally through the development, implementation, and updating of plans and programs (Wat. Code §113, §10720.1). Accordingly, for this Basin, the Department concluded that any discrepancies between information in the annual report and the GSP as approved by the Department, did not at this time create an appreciable concern regarding GSP implementation and its continued likelihood of achieving the Basin sustainability goal.

The Department anticipates conducting a more thorough review of GSP implementation as part of its periodic review of the GSP, which, in contrast to annual report reviews that consider information about only one year, will look at the periodic evaluation and the collective annual reports that provide the Department with numerous years of reporting data to better assess trends, issues or conditions of concern in the basin, and whether GSP implementation remains on track to achieve sustainability.

Please contact the assigned DWR basin point-of-contact or [sgmps@water.ca.gov](mailto:sgmps@water.ca.gov) if you have questions about this notice or the annual reporting process. The Department looks forward to receiving your Water Year 2024 Annual Report by April 1, 2025.

Thank You,

*Paul Gosselin*

Paul Gosselin  
Deputy Director  
Sustainable Groundwater Management