



SANTA CRUZ COUNTY
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH



Well and Water Systems Ordinance Update

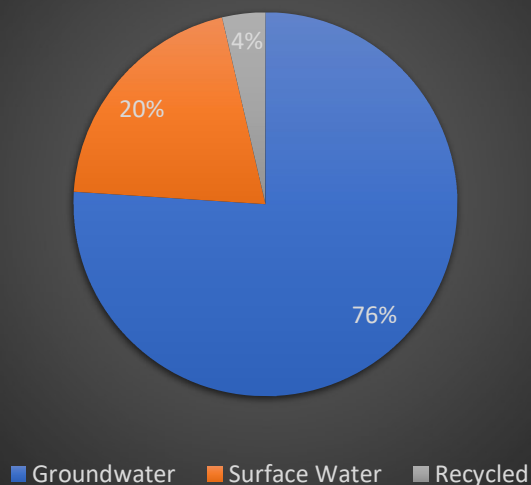
Santa Cruz Mid-County Groundwater Agency
September 19, 2024

Current Water Supplies in Santa Cruz County

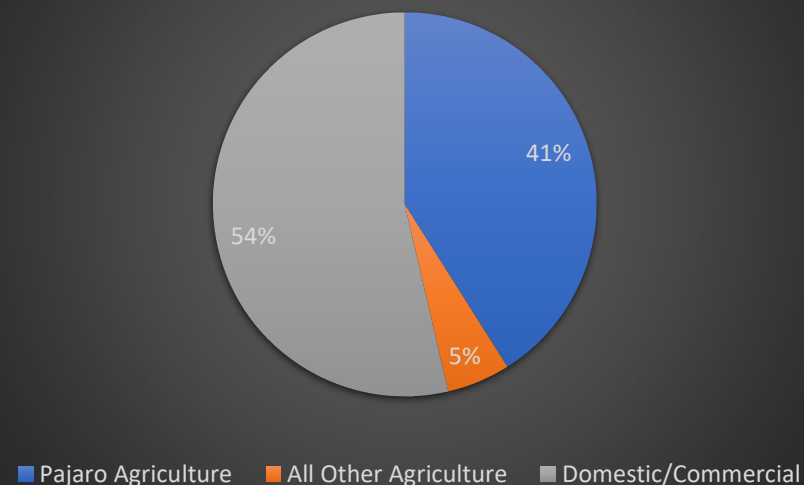
- Local surface water and groundwater basins
- Limited recycled water (currently irrigation only)
- Santa Cruz is not on state or federal water projects, we must solve our problems locally



Water Source



Water Use

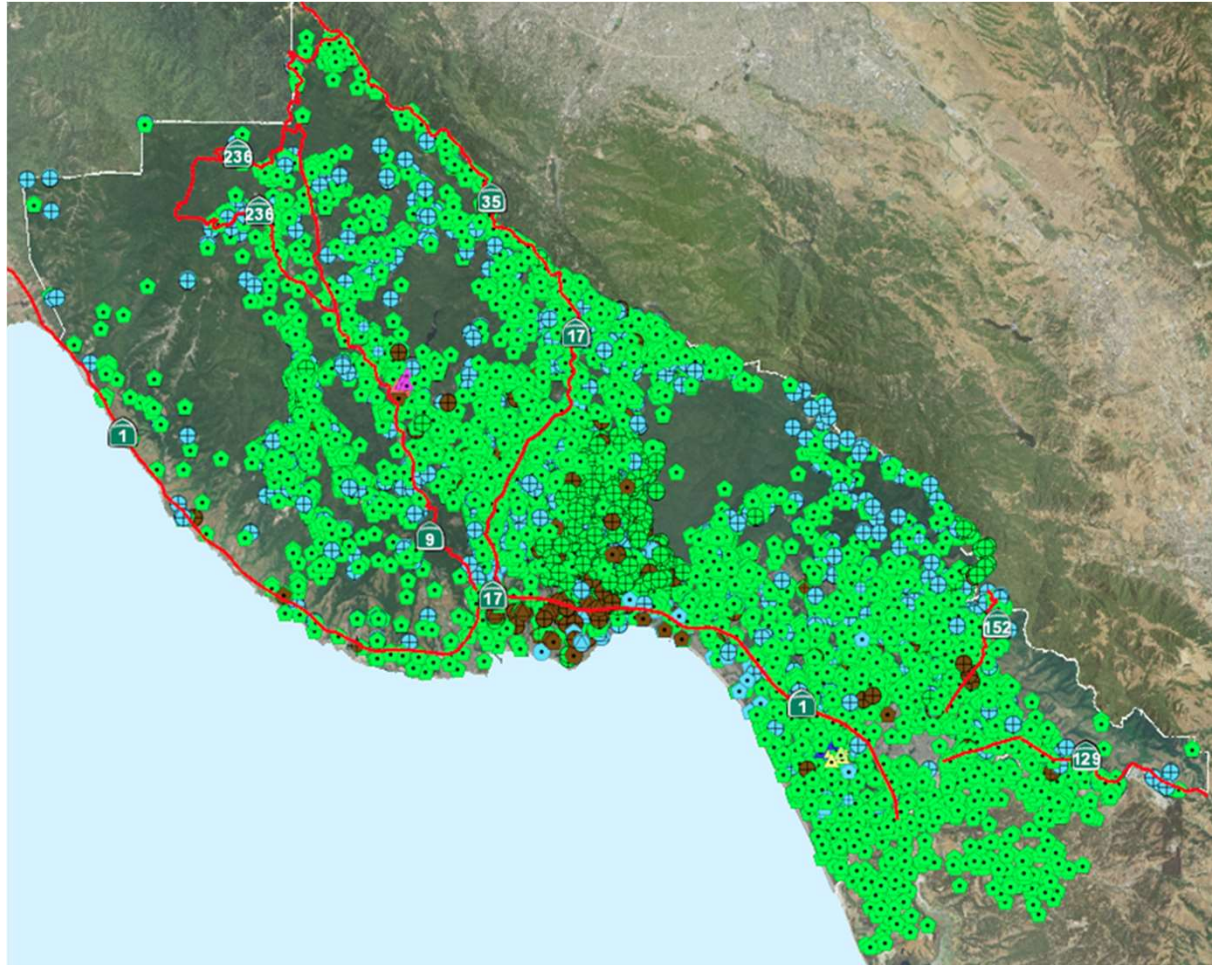


County's Role in Protecting Groundwater



- Develop/enforce ordinances:
 - Well Construction/Destruction
 - Individual Water Systems
 - Larger Water Systems
- Issue permits within jurisdiction
 - Excludes cities without formal agreements
 - Excludes state and federal land
- Enforcement

9,100+ Wells in County:



Current Well Permits:



	Subtotals	Percent	Average/year
Total Water Wells in Database	9100		
Well Construction Applications 2018-23	285		52/yr
Permit Type			
NEW WELL DOMESTIC	52	18%	10
NEW WELL IRRIGATION	3	1%	0.5
NEW WELL NON-DOMESTIC	6	2%	1
REPLACEMENT WELL - DOMESTIC	23	8%	
REPLACEMENT WELL - IRRIGATION	12	4%	
REPLACEMENT WELL - NON-DOMESTIC	6	2%	
SUPPLEMENTAL WELL - DOMESTIC	147	52%	
SUPPLEMENTAL WELL - IRRIGATION	22	8%	
SUPPLEMENTAL WELL - NON-DOMESTIC	14	5%	
Subtotal replacement/supplemental	224	79%	41
Subtotal Non-de minimis (non-domestic)	63	22%	13

Purpose of Well Ordinance:

Well Ordinance (Chapter 7.70)

1. Provide well construction and destruction standards to protect water quality and minimize environmental impacts.
2. Implement policies of the County General Plan and the Local Coastal Plan (LCP)
3. Update to include Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA), and protection of public trust resources

Individual Water System (IWS) Ordinance (Chapter 7.73)

Ensure adequate water availability and water quality for homes and other uses dependent on private wells for water supply.



Reasons for Update:



- Since the last update, policy changes at the State and local level, have occurred:
 - Passage of SGMA
 - Senate Bill 552 looks to counties to take more responsibility for deficiencies of private wells.
 - Executive Order N-7-22 looks more at well interference
 - Ongoing case law regarding CEQA review and protection of public trust values
 - County has adopted the Climate Action and Adaptation Plan, the Drought Response and Outreach Plan
 - National Marine Fisheries Service has raised concerns about interconnected surface waters in the County
- Previous lack of regulatory oversight of soil borings

Update Process to Date:



1. Data collection, process review, check with other jurisdictions
2. Preliminary well ordinance update recommendations from staff
3. County Water Advisory Commission initial review and recommendation to proceed
4. Technical Advisory Committee: four meetings
5. Additional meetings with key parties for detailed review: water agencies, well drillers, resource stakeholders.
6. Back to Water Advisory Commission for review and recommendation to proceed to Planning Commission (August 7th public meeting)

Technical Expertise	Person
Small farmers	Alma Fernandez
Large working lands/Agriculture	Dennis Lebow
Large working lands/Agriculture alternate	Robert Wall
Well driller	Aaron Lingemann
Well driller	Dave Landino
Water Advisory Commission	Bryan Largay
Water Advisory Commission	Nate Gillespie
Santa Cruz Mid-County and Santa Margarita Groundwater Agencies	Rob Swartz
Pajaro Valley Water Management Agency	Brian Lockwood
Biotic resources -National Marine Fisheries Service	Rick Rogers (NMFS)
Biotic resources -California Department of Fish and Wildlife	Jessie Maxfield
Public utilities/Soquel Creek	Brice Dalhmeier
Department of Water Resources	Benjamin Brezing



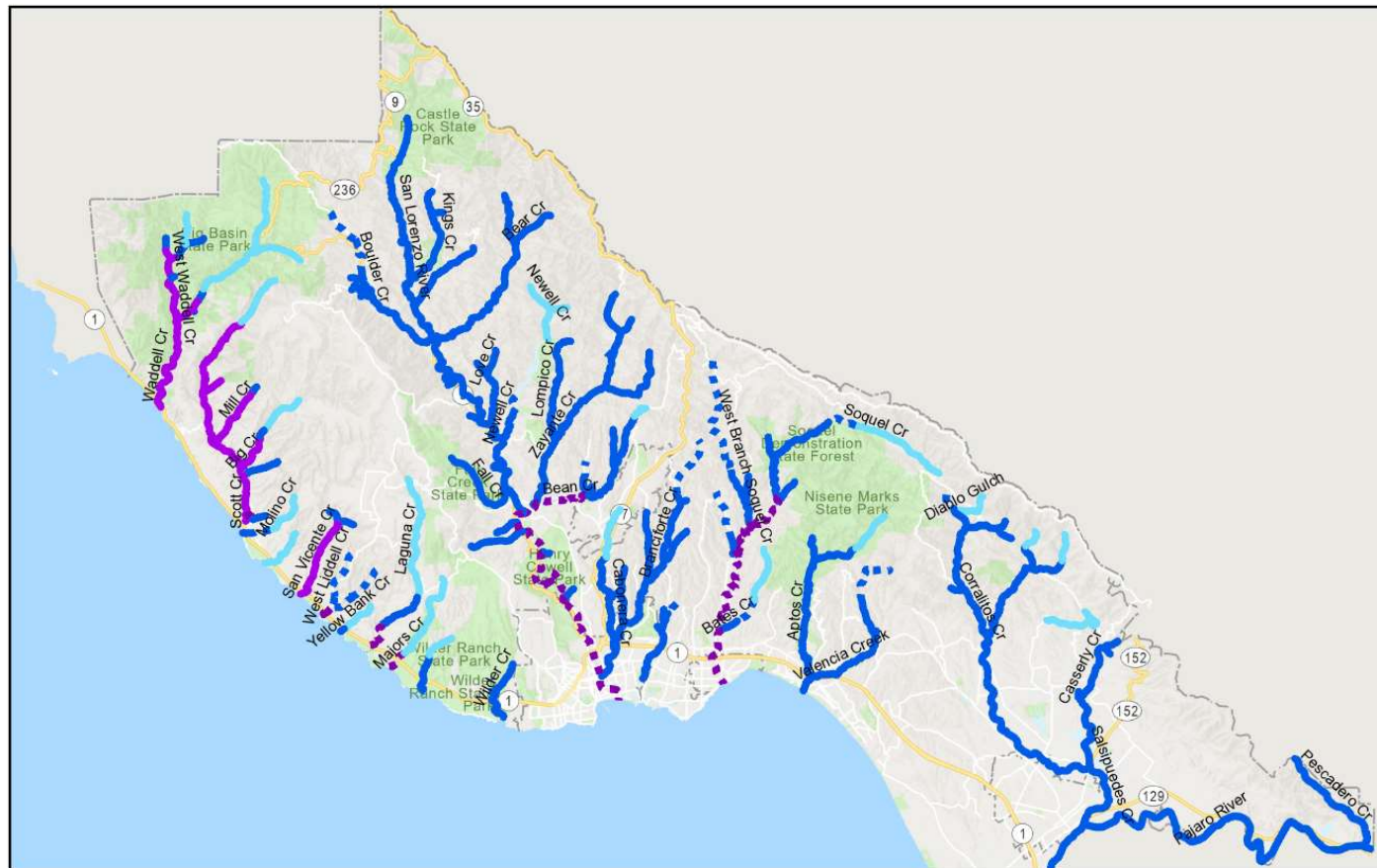
Significant Changes:



- Tiered (Tier 1 through 4) approach to well permits so small domestic and replacement wells are a lower tier, and new large capacity wells are a higher tier.
- Tier 4 wells - new water uses over 50 AFY are discretionary, require significant analysis, CEQA, and can be denied.
- More extensive water quality testing will be required to develop wells and water quality and yield testing will be required at time of sale.
- Metering and reporting required on new and replacement wells that will extract more than 2 acre-feet per year for non-domestic purposes.

Proposed Level of Review and Mitigation Required for Various Types of Well permit Applications					
Tier	Criteria	Average Number of Permits/year	CEQA Review Required?*	Connected Stream Setback	Nearby Well Setback
Tier 1	De Minimis, domestic < 5 connections; Non-de minimis <2 AFY	44	Ministerial	>50 ft and 100 ft deep seal <u>within 1000 ft of stream</u> **	>50 ft
Tier 2	Non-De minimis Replace/Supplemental	11	Ministerial	>100 ft or not less than existing, and 200 ft deep seal <u>within 2000 ft of stream</u> **	>50 ft, or not less than existing
	<u>Public Water system replace/supplemental</u>	1			
Tier 3	New Non-De minimis wells that are consistent with GSPs, meet Tier 3 calculated setbacks, and will pump less than 50 afy/100gpm	1	Ministerial	<u>If within 2000 ft of stream</u> , Using depletion model, 10th percentile dry season flow shall not be reduced by more than allowed % after 10 years of pumping ***	Calculated minimum setback so that drawdown at nearby well is less than 5 feet****
	Wells that do not meet Tier 1 or 2 minimum setbacks, but do meet Tier 3 calculated setbacks	?			
Tier 4	Wells that do not meet Tier 1,2,or 3 requirements; or located in a control zone or Tier 4 gw concern area	?	Yes	Analysis, including cumulative effect on streamflow in overall basin	Analysis and mitigation
	<u>New Public Water System Serves > 199 connections</u>	<1			

Salmonid Bearing Streams



January 8, 2024

Street Labels

Street Labels

Streams Fish Bearing

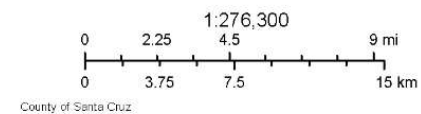
Steelhead and Limited Coho

Steelhead and Coho

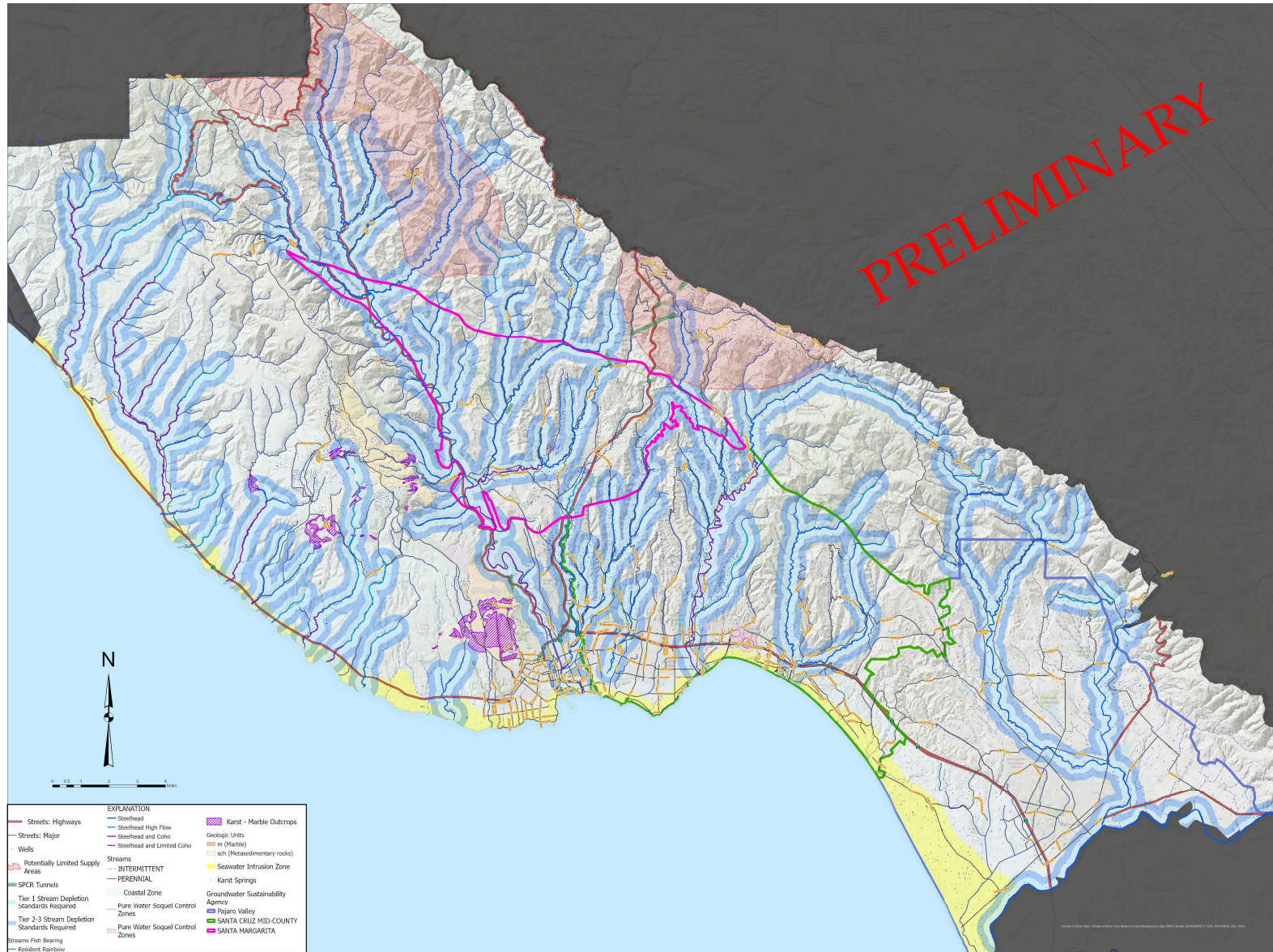
Steelhead High Flow

Steelhead

Resident Rainbow



PRELIMINARY

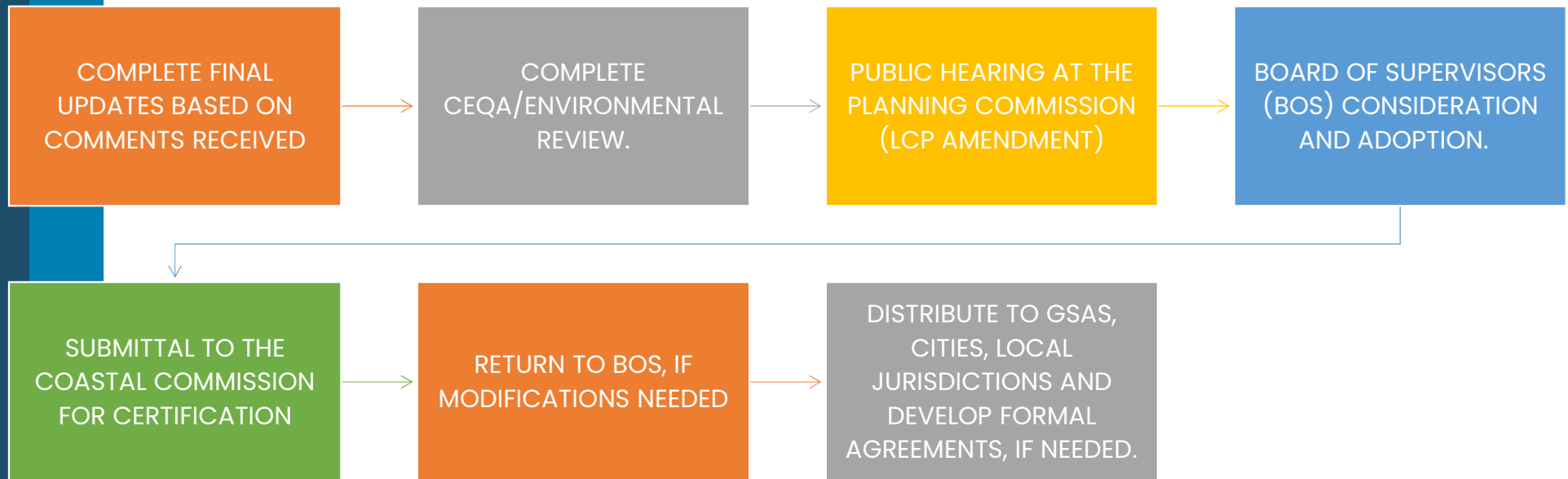


What is the effect on GSAs?



- All well permits in area of interest to a GSA will be shared.
- Comments will be required from GSAs for Tier 3 and Tier 4 wells. Comments may be solicited for some Tier 2 wells.
- County support of GSP implementation. Includes language:
 - (I) If a groundwater sustainability agency has required metering or other conditions for an existing, new, replacement, or supplemental well, the property owner shall abide by those requirements. If the usage information or the results of a site inspection show that the well owner is not in compliance with those requirements, the Health Officer shall require that corrective measures be taken.
 - (J) New, supplementary, or replacement wells shall not be constructed within a designated control zone for a groundwater management project.
- Stream depletion analysis, water quality testing, and yield testing support efforts to manage the basin.

Next Steps





Discussion