

**STATE WATER RESOURCES CONTROL BOARD
BOARD MEETING SESSION – OFFICE OF SUSTAINABLE GROUNDWATER
MANAGEMENT
DECEMBER 2, 2025**

ITEM 6

SUBJECT

CONSIDERATION OF A PROPOSED RESOLUTION TO RETURN THE KAWEAH GROUNDWATER SUBBASIN TO THE JURISDICTION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES CONSISTENT WITH THE SUSTAINABLE GROUNDWATER MANAGEMENT ACT.

DISCUSSION

The Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) requires local groundwater sustainability agencies (GSAs) in high- and medium-priority groundwater basins to develop and implement groundwater sustainability plans (GSPs) so that the many uses of groundwater can continue into the future. The Department of Water Resources (DWR) has authority under Chapter 10 of SGMA to evaluate GSPs developed by GSAs. If DWR determines that a GSA does not have a GSP adequate to sustainably manage groundwater in their subbasin, Chapter 11 of SGMA gives the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) authority to protect groundwater resources through a process called “state intervention.” State intervention may include designation of basins as probationary and, if the deficiencies that led to the probationary designation are not addressed within one year, may include the further step of the Board developing and adopting an interim plan for the basin. State intervention is additional to local management and is intended to be temporary, lasting only until local agencies demonstrate an adequate plan to manage their respective basins. During state intervention, the Board works with the GSAs as they correct deficiencies (issues) and implement their GSPs. If the State Water Board determines the GSAs adequately revise their GSPs in a way that will result in sustainable management of the basin, the Board may return a basin to DWR’s jurisdiction.

DWR designated the Kaweah Subbasin as a high-priority basin subject to critical conditions of overdraft. In March 2023, DWR determined the 2022 GSPs for the Kaweah Subbasin were “inadequate,” which initiated the State Water Board’s state intervention process (Wat. Code, § 10735.2, subd. (a)(3)). The inadequacy determination was based on deficiencies concerning chronic lowering of groundwater levels and land subsidence (land sinking due to groundwater pumping).

In May 2024, State Water Board staff released a Draft Probationary Hearing Staff Report (Draft Staff Report), which affirmed the deficiencies identified by DWR. In addition, the Draft Staff Report identified concerns regarding groundwater quality and interconnected surface water. The Kaweah Subbasin adopted amended GSPs in November 2024. Board staff evaluated the 2024 GSPs and determined that the GSAs made significant progress in addressing DWR-identified deficiencies and State Water Board concerns in their revisions. Board staff concluded that the GSAs amended the GSPs such that local implementation of the Kaweah Subbasin's 2024 GSPs is likely to achieve sustainable groundwater management in the subbasin, and a probationary designation is not warranted at this time.

Board staff recommend the Board return the subbasin to DWR's jurisdiction.

A [Staff Assessment](#) released October 13, 2025, describes staff's evaluation of the 2024 GSPs, includes recommended actions to improve the GSPs, and recommends the Board refer the Kaweah Subbasin back to DWR's jurisdiction.

POLICY ISSUE

Should the State Water Board adopt the proposed Resolution to refer the Kaweah Subbasin from SGMA Chapter 11 back to the Department of Water Resources' jurisdiction under SGMA Chapter 10?

FISCAL IMPACT

None.

REGIONAL BOARD IMPACT

None.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Board adopt the proposed Resolution.