

Groundwater Quality Protection Strategy FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. What is the Groundwater Quality Protection Strategy?

The Strategy is simply that – a strategy. It is not a regulation or policy. It is a document that will be readily available to the public and decision makers and will provide:

- Summary of the current conditions and state of groundwater quality throughout the Central Valley
- Summary of current groundwater regulatory programs being implemented by the Regional Water Board and other agencies, and
- Roadmap for future regulatory and control activities that will be implemented by the Regional Water Board to assure comprehensive, consistent, and coordinated groundwater protection program is being implemented throughout the Central Valley Region.

2. Why is a Strategy important?

The Strategy is important for several reasons. This document will provide valuable information to the public and decision makers on groundwater quality within the Central Valley. Specifically it will provide a strategy or roadmap staff of the Regional Water Board intends to take to implement current and future regulatory and control activities. It will identify where coordination with other agencies is critical to avoiding duplication or overlapping regulatory authority. The document will also describe the tools we will utilize to coordinate with other agencies to continue to protect groundwater quality.

3. What do water users stand to gain from the Strategy?

Through the process of developing and implementing the Groundwater Strategy, it is expected that water users will gain a better understanding of groundwater and groundwater quality conditions in the Central Valley and the Regional Water Board's programs to preserve and protect groundwater quality.

4. What are some of the benefits of developing a Strategy?

The development of this Strategy is expected to result in several benefits, such as, outlining the steps our agency will follow to protect groundwater quality, keep the public and elected officials informed, promote efficient use of Water Board resources, improve interagency coordination, promote consensus building, encourage forward thinking, and increase public awareness.

5. Will the Strategy develop groundwater rights requirements?

No, the Central Valley Water Board does not have any water right authority and this Strategy will not address any issue involving groundwater rights, including water use or the volume or quantity of groundwater associated with that use.

6. How is this Strategy going to help me protect or clean up contaminated groundwater where I live?

The Strategy is not a regulatory program. However, it will describe various Agency programs which address groundwater protection and remediation. Interagency coordination and implementation of these programs will be included in the Strategy. Those interested in protecting groundwater can obtain information on [Pollution Prevention](#) on several websites and through agencies such as the Department of Water Resources.

7. Will this Strategy provide instructions to the public if they see someone they believe is illegally dumping in to groundwater?

No it will not. The California Environmental Protection Agency maintains an electronic [complaint form](#) on their website which can be used by the public. The public can also file reports with their local Environmental Health Department or Regional Water Board 916-464-3291.

8. Will the Strategy set a groundwater protection policy, establish water well protection zones, require groundwater quality standards, or set specific objectives and target dates for each goal (i.e., raise groundwater levels or public education on groundwater vulnerability)?

The Strategy is not developing new regulations, policies, or amending the Basin Plan. The Strategy will identify issues and concerns, including priorities on how our Board will move forward to address groundwater quality throughout the Central Valley region.

9. Will nitrate contamination be addressed in the Strategy? If not, will a separate nitrate management strategy be developed?

Yes, Nitrate in groundwater is a concern for the Central Valley Water Board and it will be described and addressed in the Strategy. The Central Valley Water Board is currently implementing a comprehensive Basin Plan amendment to develop and implement a regionwide Salinity and Nitrate Management Plan. This has been referred to as the CV-Salts Initiative. The Strategy will address this basin planning activity.

10. Is anyone analyzing existing groundwater data?

Yes, the State and Regional Water Boards and dischargers regulated by the Boards have collected and analyzed groundwater data. Some of this existing groundwater data is now available on the State Water Board's Groundwater Ambient Monitoring and Assessment ([GAMA](#)) Program website. GAMA is California's comprehensive groundwater quality monitoring program. As part of the Strategy development staff will coordinate with GAMA to identify the need for additional studies or analysis. One purpose for the public workshops is to identify additional groundwater monitoring programs and any data that may be available electronically.

11. Will the Strategy address long term funding sources to provide technical assistance to property owners.

No, the Strategy will not address long term funding sources for individual property owners.

12. Will the Strategy establish a system to monitor and analyze groundwater wells?

No, see questions #10 for information on existing groundwater monitoring.

13. Will the Strategy be made available to the public?

Yes, the public will have several opportunities for input on the development of the Strategy during public workshops or through written comments. Once finalized, the Strategy will be made available to the public and decision makers, in electronic form on our agency's [website](#) and in hardcopy by contact Pam Buford.

14. Why is the Central Valley Regional Water Board getting involved in groundwater?

The State and Regional Water Boards are the agencies created through the California Water Code with the responsibility of water quality including the prevention and abatement of water pollution and nuisance. The mission of the Central Valley Water Board is to preserve and enhance the quality of California's water resources for present and future generations. Our water resources include both surface and ground waters.

15. Will the Strategy address septic systems that contaminated groundwater?

Yes, in that it will identify and discuss septic systems as a concern for groundwater quality and how septic systems will be addressed through our regulatory programs. The State Water Resources Control Board is currently

working on proposed regulations for Septic Systems (Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems) more information on this topic is available on their [website](#).

16. How is groundwater currently managed in California?

Groundwater is currently managed in California through a variety of measures, such as overlying property rights, statutory authority, adjudicated groundwater basins, establishment of groundwater management districts or agencies, established Groundwater Management Plans (AB 3030 Plan) and subsequent updates (SB 1938 Plan), and City and County Ordinances.

17. How much will this cost me?

There are no costs involved since the Strategy is not developing new regulations or policies.