CALIFORNIA
Water Boards

EDMUND G. BROWN JR.
GOVERNOR

MATTHEW RODRIQUEZ
SECRETARY FOR
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

State Water Resources Control Board

JAN 10 2017

Disclosure of Public Water System Well Location Information on GeoTracker GAMA

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is to inform you that the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) is ceasing its practice of obscuring or redacting the actual locations of public water system wells.

Since 2001, the State Water Board has obscured the actual locations of certain wells in the GeoTracker and GeoTracker GAMA information systems. Actual well locations have been shown for site cleanup monitoring wells; however, the State Water Board has obscured the actual locations of public water system wells (and some other groundwater wells) by displaying only a randomly-generated point within approximately one mile of the well's actual location. In addition, the State Water Board has redacted documents to remove the actual locations of public water system wells that were provided to the public in response to Public Records Act requests.

Water Code section 13752 was amended in June 2015 to allow public access to water well completion reports, commonly referred to as "well logs." Water well completion reports, which typically include actual well location information, are now publicly available by request from the Department of Water Resources.

In August 2015, the State Water Board solicited comments from interested parties regarding potential changes to the State Water Board's practice for the disclosure of well locations in GeoTracker and GeoTracker GAMA in light of the amendment to Water Code section 13752. Comments were received from many parties, including state and federal agencies, national laboratories, the University of California, agricultural coalitions, non-governmental organizations, irrigated agriculture, industry, and water agencies.

I have evaluated the comments, and I believe that the public interest in access to accurate, complete, and centrally located groundwater data outweighs the public interest in maintaining the confidentiality of the actual locations of public water system wells. Public access to the actual well locations is consistent with the Legislature's clear policy direction regarding the transparency of groundwater data. Public access will also facilitate efforts by governmental agencies and nongovernmental organizations to identify individuals and communities that are in need of infrastructure and replacement water supplies, as well as general research regarding groundwater quality.

The State Water Board is revising the public interface to GeoTracker and GeoTracker GAMA to allow public access to the actual locations of the public water system wells. As discussed with several organizations representing public water systems, public access will only be granted to individuals who request a password, in order to provide a level of accountability and reduce

concerns about unrestricted public access. In addition, at the request of the Army and the Marine Corps, the locations of several groundwater wells that serve military personnel will remain obscured. It is expected that the revisions to GeoTracker and GeoTracker GAMA will be completed in January.

Questions may be directed to GAMA staff at WB.GAMA@waterboards.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

Thomas Howard

Thomas Howard
Executive Director