



NEWSLETTER

SGMA UPDATES FOR KERN SUBBASIN RESIDENTS

JANUARY 2026

Following a probationary hearing on September 17, 2025, the Kern Subbasin has successfully exited State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) probation consideration and is returning to the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) for continued oversight under SGMA.

KERN SUBBASIN RETURNS TO DWR OVERSIGHT

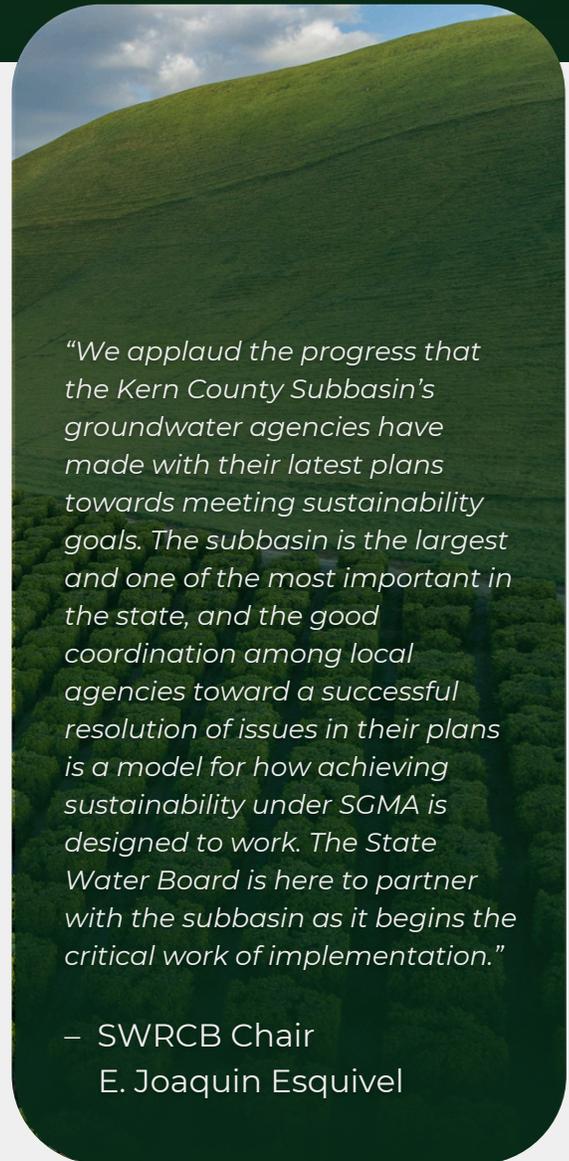
This milestone reflects the collective efforts of local Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs) to strengthen coordination, improve planning, and demonstrate meaningful progress toward long-term groundwater sustainability.

WHY DOES THIS MATTER?

The move provides relief for area water managers and groundwater users who had been facing the possibility of probation. Probation would have imposed significant requirements, including well metering and registration fees, mandatory reporting of groundwater pumping to the state, and per-acre-foot extraction fees.

This outcome also affirms that the amended Groundwater Sustainability Plan adopted in summer 2025 (the 2025 Plan) meets the SWRCB'S standards for being protective of groundwater users across all interest categories, including domestic and community well users, environmental interests, and agriculture. The 20 Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs) in the Kern Subbasin are now actively implementing the 2025 Plan within their respective jurisdictions and collaboratively across the region.

Now, DWR is conducting its review of the 2025 Plan. The GSAs will work closely with DWR staff to support their review process and provide DWR with ongoing updates on GSP implementation.



"We applaud the progress that the Kern County Subbasin's groundwater agencies have made with their latest plans towards meeting sustainability goals. The subbasin is the largest and one of the most important in the state, and the good coordination among local agencies toward a successful resolution of issues in their plans is a model for how achieving sustainability under SGMA is designed to work. The State Water Board is here to partner with the subbasin as it begins the critical work of implementation."

– SWRCB Chair
E. Joaquin Esquivel



WHAT'S NEXT?

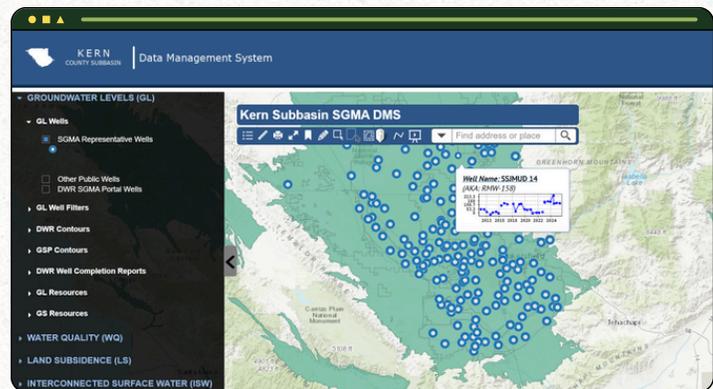
2026 entails the GSAs bringing the new 2025 Plan to life with on-the-ground actions that support groundwater sustainability.



Implementation of the 2025 Plan includes a strong focus on monitoring groundwater conditions across the Subbasin. Ongoing monitoring of groundwater levels, water quality, and land subsidence provides the data needed to track conditions, evaluate progress, and inform management actions. These efforts help ensure decisions are grounded in reliable, up-to-date information.

The Kern Subbasin’s Data Management System (DMS) provides public access to key groundwater information, including groundwater levels, water quality, and land subsidence data. This interactive, online tool supports transparency and allows stakeholders to explore data that informs groundwater management decisions across the Subbasin.

dms.geiconsultants.com/kern/mapviewer



UPCOMING MILESTONES



Get notified of upcoming milestones by signing up for our email list at the KernGSP.com homepage and following us on social media @KernCountySubbasin on Instagram and Kern County Subbasin on Facebook.



2025 WATER YEAR ANNUAL REPORT

The Kern Subbasin GSAs will submit their 2025 Water Year Annual Report to the Department of Water Resources on or before April 1, 2026. This report will be made available to the public on DWR's SGMA portal and the KernGSP.com GSP Documents webpage.



ANNUAL REPORT PUBLIC WORKSHOP

Coming this summer! This public workshop will highlight the monitoring results, projects and management actions, and progress towards the sustainability goal within the 2025 Water Year (October 2024 - September 2025)



WELL MITIGATION PLAN VERSION 3.0

The Kern Subbasin GSAs are developing an amended Well Mitigation Plan (Version 3.0), with adoption anticipated in 2026. Version 3.0 will provide clarity on mitigation options for state small water systems. A public workshop focused on the updated plan will be scheduled—stay tuned for details.



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