

August 21, 2023

As most of you should know by now, the Groundwater Sustainability Plans (GSPs) for the Tule Subbasin were deemed inadequate earlier this year by the California Department of Water Resources. Below is a summary of what that means and the process going forward over the next 18 months or so.

- The first thing that happens is the plans are now turned over to the California State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) for what they call an intervention process.
- The SWRCB will be scheduling a probation hearing for early 2024 for the Tule Subbasin. All landowners in the Tule Subbasin are likely to be receiving letters from the SWRCB notifying them that the probation hearing is being scheduled.
- Once the hearing is held, if the SWRCB determines that the Subbasin needs to be placed on probation, it triggers a process where landowners must begin reporting groundwater extractions and paying fees to the SWRCB. The website link below has more information on how that will work.
- If the Subbasin is placed in probation, the SWRCB staff will begin developing an Interim Plan that GSAs will have to implement within one year of the probationary determination.
- At anytime during the intervention or probation process, Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs) can update and resubmit their GSPs for review and determination of adequacy. That is precisely what the Tule Subbasin GSAs are currently working on.

Link to the SWRCB website information on State Intervention:

[SWRCB – Sustainable Groundwater Management Act](#)

Current Tule Subbasin GSA activities:

- Analyzing and revising the GSPs to address the inadequacies identified by DWR and SWRCB. The inadequacies mostly relate to the two following issues: Groundwater levels and subsidence.
- Per DWR and the SWRCB, for Groundwater levels, the analysis shows too many wells potentially being impacted by the GSAs Minimum Thresholds (groundwater levels under the worst case scenarios). The

GSA's are in the process of analyzing Minimum Thresholds at levels that would reduce the number of potentially impacted wells. Raising those thresholds will most likely have the impact on the Lower Tule and Pixley plans of reducing the amount of Transitional water that can be allocated.

- Even at a reduced number of wells being impacted, the GSA's need to have mitigation plans to mitigate for wells that are actually impacted. This includes proving to the SWRCB that there is funding in place to cover the mitigation costs.
- For subsidence, DWR and the SWRCB have deemed the amount of historical and projected future subsidence to be potentially damaging to critical infrastructure. The GSA's are going through a similar process as they are for groundwater elevations by analyzing and determining Minimum Thresholds that limit potential impacts to critical infrastructure.

The LTRID and Pixley Groundwater Planning Commissions and Board of Directors continue to work with staff in trying to revise the GSPs to address these issues with the goal of avoiding being placed in probation by the SWRCB. There will be a lot of time, effort, and focus placed on this process over the next several months. We will continue to send out updates as things change.

As always, call the office with questions.

Sincerely,

Eric Limas

General Manager