

## Governor Brown Signs Historic Groundwater Legislation



9-16-2014

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SACRAMENTO - Putting California communities on a path to become more resilient to water shortages, Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr. today signed historic legislation to strengthen local management and monitoring of groundwater basins most critical to the state's water needs.

"We have to learn to manage wisely water, energy, land and our investments," said Governor Brown. "That's why this is important."

The three bills signed by the Governor today - AB 1739 by Assemblymember Roger Dickinson (D-Sacramento) and Senate Bills 1168 and 1319 by Senator Fran Pavley (D-Agoura Hills) - create a framework for sustainable, local groundwater management for the first time in California history. The legislation allows local agencies to tailor sustainable groundwater plans to their regional economic and environmental needs. A signing message can be found [here](#).

"California will no longer be the only Western state that does not manage its groundwater," said Senator Pavley. "The cost of doing nothing is the biggest economic gamble. Thousands of homes and small farms cannot keep pace with the race to drill deeper and deeper wells. The bills take a balanced approach - they protect property rights and incentivize local control."

"Ensuring a sustainable supply of groundwater is a critical element of addressing the water challenges facing California," said Assemblymember Dickinson. "Over drafting our groundwater leads to subsidence and contamination; consequences we cannot afford. With these new laws in effect, California will take important steps to ensure we are protecting our valuable water supply for years to come."

"I applaud the leadership of Governor Brown, Senator Pavley and Assemblymember Dickinson on the passage of this landmark legislation to better manage our precious groundwater supplies," said Senate President pro Tem-elect Kevin de León. "There's still a lot of hard work left to do, but these bills coupled with the \$7.5 billion water bond proposal we adopted in August will help protect our residents', farmers' and industry's access to affordable and reliable water."

"Today's bill signing is a historic step for our state. It is so important that we take these steps to preserve and protect one of our most valuable resources, groundwater," said California State Board of Food and Agriculture President Craig McNamara.

"Not very many years from now, I believe that we will look back on today as a turning point in securing reliable, long-term water supplies for California's vital agricultural economy," said Association of California Water Agencies Executive Director Tim Quinn.

"This legislation marks a new beginning for enduring sustainable management of California's rivers and groundwater systems," said The Nature Conservancy External Affairs Director Jay Ziegler.

"At Driscoll's, we are highly dependent on groundwater. The future of agriculture in areas along the central coast hinges on sustainable management of this precious resource," said Driscoll's CEO Miles Reiter.

A photo from today's bill signing can be found below.

Groundwater is a critical element of the state's water system, making up more than one-third of California's water supply. The bills establish a definition of sustainable groundwater management and require local agencies to adopt management plans for the state's most important groundwater basins. The legislation prioritizes groundwater basins that are currently overdrafted and sets a timeline for implementation:

- By 2017, local groundwater management agencies must be identified;
- By 2020, overdrafted groundwater basins must have sustainability plans;
- By 2022, other high and medium priority basins not currently in overdraft must have sustainability plans; and
- By 2040, all high and medium priority groundwater basins must achieve sustainability.

Additionally, the legislation provides measurable objectives and milestones to reach sustainability and a state role of limited intervention when local agencies are unable or unwilling to adopt sustainable management plans.

In addition to this legislation, the Governor announced that he has signed the following bills today:

- AB 2453 by Assemblymember Katcho Achadjian (R-San Luis Obispo) - Paso Robles Basin Water District.
- AB 1043 by Assemblymember Ed Chau (D-Monterey Park) - Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2006: groundwater contamination.

For full text of the bills, visit: <http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov>

Governor Brown was also joined today by representatives from the Association of California Water Agencies, B and E Lundberg Farm, Driscoll's, Sierra Orchards, Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians, Bay Area Council, California Building Industry Association, California League of Conservation Voters, California State Association of Counties, California Water Foundation, Clean Water Action, Community Water Center, Irvine Ranch Water District, Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, Nature Conservancy, Northern California Water Association, Orange County Water District, Parker Groundwater, Resources Legacy Fund, San Gabriel Basin Water Quality Authority, Santa Clara Valley Water District, S.D. Bechtel Jr. Foundation, State Water Contractors, West Yost Associates, and the Wine Institute.

Today's announcement follows on more than a year of action to strengthen and make more resilient California's water system. Last December, the Governor formed a [Drought Task Force](#) to closely manage precious water supplies, to expand water conservation wherever possible and to quickly respond to emerging drought impacts throughout the state. In January, the administration finalized a comprehensive [Water Action Plan](#) that charts the way for California to become more resilient in the face of droughts and floods. During that same month, the Governor declared a [drought state of emergency](#) and in April 2014, called on the state to [redouble their efforts](#) at combating drought. Last month the Governor signed legislation to put a [water bond](#) before voters after winning bipartisan approval in the Legislature.

Governor Brown has called on all Californians to reduce their water use by 20 percent and prevent water waste - visit [SaveOurWater.com](http://SaveOurWater.com) to find out how everyone can do their part and visit [Drought.CA.Gov](http://Drought.CA.Gov) to learn more about how California is dealing with the effects of the drought.

A photo caption can be found below.

1.) Governor Brown signs historic groundwater legislation. Photo Credit: Justin Short, Office of the Governor.

For a high resolution copy of this photo, please contact Danella Debel, Office of the Governor at [Danella.Debel@gov.ca.gov](mailto:Danella.Debel@gov.ca.gov).

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OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

September 16, 2014

To the Members of the California Legislature:

I am signing AB 1739, SB1168 and SB1319, which taken collectively establish a new structure for managing the State's groundwater.

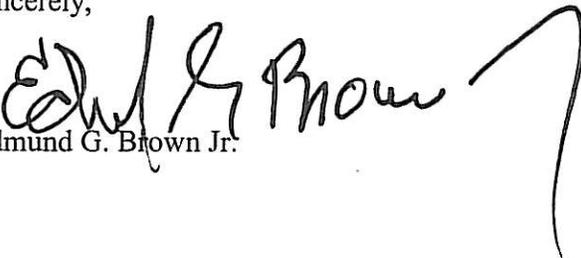
These bills accomplish a number of goals described in the California Water Action Plan, a five-year plan to sustainably manage our water resources. When combined with the other elements outlined in the plan -- conservation, water recycling, expanded storage, safe drinking water, wetlands and watershed restoration -- and the passage of Proposition 1, we can take giant strides to secure California's water future.

A central feature of these bills is the recognition that groundwater management in California is best accomplished locally. Local agencies will now have the power to assess the conditions of their local groundwater basins and take the necessary steps to bring those basins in a state of chronic long-term overdraft into balance.

The State's primary role is to provide guidance and technical support on how to plan for a more sustainable future and to step in on an interim basis when, but only when, local agencies fail to exercise their responsibilities as set forth in this legislation.

My administration will work closely with all affected groups to ensure that the statute is fairly implemented. Further, I will submit for legislative consideration during the next session a proposal to streamline judicial adjudications of groundwater rights.

Sincerely,

  
Edmund G. Brown Jr.