



## Delta-Mendota Subbasin - Spring 2026 Newsletter

### Delta-Mendota Subbasin exits State Water Board Intervention, Returns to DWR Oversight

The State Water Resources Control Board (Water Board) unanimously adopted a resolution on April 7, 2026, to return the Delta-Mendota Subbasin to the jurisdiction of the California Department of Water Resources (DWR). By avoiding a “probationary” designation, the subbasin’s growers will not be required to pay the state a \$300 fee to register their wells and then pay \$20 per acre foot pumped.

The Water Board’s decision follows the release of a March 2026 Water Board Staff Assessment which concluded that the subbasin’s Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs) had made significant progress in addressing previously identified deficiencies through its revised, 2024 single Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP).

The Water Board became involved in oversight for the Delta-Mendota Subbasin in March 2023, after DWR determined that the subbasin’s multiple GSPs did not meet the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act’s (SGMA’s) regulatory requirements. DWR referred the subbasin to the Water Board for further review under SGMA’s intervention provisions and a potential probationary status.

### Key Progress and Improvements

The State Water Board staff's recommendation was based on several critical updates made to the subbasin's revised GSP:

- **Unified Management:** The GSAs adopted a single, subbasin-wide plan instead of multiple individual plans.
- **Drinking Water Protection:** A new mitigation program was established to protect domestic drinking water wells from the impacts of declining groundwater levels or water quality degradation.
- **Pumping Reductions:** The plan now includes pumping limits and specific pumping reduction plans for each GSA group to combat chronic groundwater lowering and land subsidence.
- **Water Quality Monitoring:** The agencies expanded the frequency and scope of well sampling to better track and address groundwater quality concerns. GSAs will continue to evaluate the GSP as they work toward achieving sustainability.

The GSP will be periodically reviewed by DWR and the Water Board Staff Assessment also includes recommendations for future GSP revisions.

### Subbasin GSAs Partner to Tackle Groundwater Management via New Joint Powers Authority

The 23 Delta-Mendota Subbasin GSAs have formed a Joint Powers Authority (JPA) to collaboratively manage groundwater through a single GSP.

A JPA is a legal entity formed by two or more public agencies to jointly exercise common powers. JPAs allow agencies to cooperate, pool resources for insurance, issue bonds, and/or manage regional projects including the implementation of a GSP.

Since the formation of GSAs in the Subbasin, the San Luis & Delta-Mendota Water Authority (SLDMWA) has provided fiscal, contracting and administrative services for the subbasin. The assistance of SLDMWA was invaluable and greatly appreciated by the GSAs. Recently, SLDMWA’s Board consolidated its mission to focus on core objectives and transitioned away from providing these services. In response, the Subbasin GSAs evaluated several options to ensure continuity of necessary services and decided to form a JPA.

The new Delta-Mendota Subbasin GSAs Joint Powers Authority, governed by a 7-member board representing all the subbasin GSAs, ensures local control and protects member rights while managing sustainability efforts. The goal of the JPA is to deliver collaborative, efficiency-driven sustainable management of the Subbasin’s groundwater. (Note: Going forward there will be 21 GSAs as Oro Loma and Widren Water Districts have joined the Central Delta-Mendota GSA JPA.)

Members of the public are invited to attend the JPA Board of Directors meetings online or in person at the Grassland Water District Water District Board Room, 200 W. Willmott Avenue, Los Banos. An opportunity for the public to make comments is included in every agenda. Meetings are held at 1:00 p.m. on the 2nd Monday of the month, except in September and November of 2026 when meetings will be on the 3rd Monday.

Subscribe to the mailing list here:

<https://deltamendota.org/get-involved>

## New Policy Safeguards Domestic Wells in the Delta-Mendota Subbasin

A new Domestic Well Mitigation program is being implemented to protect shallow well users from declining groundwater levels caused by subbasin groundwater management. The subbasin GSAs created the program using state and community organization guidelines. While fewer than three wells per year are likely to be affected, the Mitigation Policy will address eligible wells.

### Who Can Apply

The program focuses on domestic well owners and small water systems using groundwater for household needs. To qualify:

- The well must have been in use when the revised Groundwater Sustainability Plan was adopted. (2024)
- The well owner must register their well (if a local GSA has a registration program).
- Wells installed after plan adoption at shallower depths than GSA-approved thresholds are not eligible.

### How the Program Works

If a domestic well stops producing water, the well-owner can request emergency assistance (such as bottled water or tank delivery). Once a complete application has been submitted, the GSA will make reasonable efforts to provide short-term emergency water. The GSA where the well is located will conduct a field investigation to find out what caused the well failure and identify the most appropriate solution. Solutions might include lowering a pump, deepening or replacing a well, or connecting to a nearby water system. If the failure isn't related to groundwater levels, for example a mechanical failure, the GSA will help connect the owner with other available resources.

### Program Funding

A \$300,000 pool has been set aside to allow a quick response to a domestic well failure. Each GSA will also fund its own investigations and emergency water supplies as needed.

## Domestic Well Policy Briefing

June 5, 2026, Noon

GSA representatives, NGOs and other Community members are invited to find out more about the new Domestic Well Policy at a lunchtime briefing on June 5. During this session we will review the application process and more details about program implementation.

Registration is open now [HERE:](#)

[https://stantec.zoom.us/meeting/register/Jr\\_Ua9S0Tzm53NO\\_spemrA](https://stantec.zoom.us/meeting/register/Jr_Ua9S0Tzm53NO_spemrA)

## Central Valley Program Aims to Protect Households from Contaminated Well Water

GSAs in the Delta-Mendota and other Central Valley subbasins have partnered with Valley Water Collaborative (VWC) to offer free, confidential nitrate testing for private wells and provide free, safe drinking water to residents with contaminated wells. This program, funded by the State Water Board's SAFER program, addresses high nitrate levels and includes testing for other contaminants like arsenic.

VWC works with various GSAs to fulfill requirements under the Nitrate Control Program and GSP implementations. The partnership allows the organizations to work collaboratively to avoid duplication of efforts in their respective administration of their programs.

VWC will provide Delta-Mendota subbasin residents with information regarding the Delta-Mendota Subbasin Domestic Well Mitigation Policy. In the event VWC, encounters a dry well that may be eligible for mitigation under the Domestic Well Mitigation Policy, VWC will notify the Delta-Mendota contact person and provide the resident with referral information on the resident's options for seeking mitigation under the Delta-Mendota Subbasin Domestic Well Mitigation Policy.

To learn more about groundwater testing for nitrates and temporary free drinking water for those impacted by nitrates, visit: <https://valleywaterc.org>.

### How to find your GSA

Not sure what GSA you are in? You can check on the DWR website, on-line GSA Map Viewer. Just enter your home or business address [HERE:](#)

<https://sgma.water.ca.gov/webgis/index.jsp?appid=gasmaster&rz.>

## Delta-Mendota Subbasin GSAs

Aliso Water District  
Central Delta-Mendota  
City of Dos Palos  
City of Firebaugh  
City of Gustine  
City of Los Banos  
City of Mendota  
City of Newman

City of Patterson  
County of Madera—3  
DM-II  
Farmers Water District  
Fresno County| Management Area 'A'  
Fresno County| Management Area 'B'  
Grassland Water District  
Merced County| Delta-Mendota

Northwestern Delta-Mendota  
Patterson Irrigation District  
Turner Island Water District-2  
San Joaquin River Exchange  
Contractors Water Authority  
West Stanislaus Irrigation District