

HYDROVISIONS

GROUNDWATER RESOURCES ASSOCIATION OF CALIFORNIA

Legislative Corner

Legislative Corner, September 2002

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In spite of the preoccupation with the budget, it was an active year for water issues with more and more attention being paid to groundwater. The action included proposals to regulate groundwater, publication of the Sax report, Statewide Groundwater Monitoring Taskforce activities, and more proposed legislation to regulate contaminant levels. It is clear that more and more top elected officials are beginning to realize the important role groundwater plays in our State's water supply and delivery and trying to protect it. GRA has been an active player helping to shape and resolve these key issues.

AB 599 (Liu) - The Groundwater Quality Monitoring Act of 2001

AB 599 (Liu) requires the State Water Resources Control Board to integrate existing monitoring programs and design new program elements, as necessary, for the purpose of establishing a comprehensive monitoring program capable of assessing each groundwater basin in the state through direct and other statistically reliable sampling approaches. Further, to create an interagency task force to identify measures to increase coordination among state and federal agencies that collect groundwater contamination information.

The interagency task force and advisory committee have been meeting since February 2002 to meet the requirements of the Act. The US

Geological Survey (USGS) has been contracted by the State Board to assist in development of the comprehensive monitoring plan. The USGS is conducting evaluations on two pilot areas: (1) the West and Central Coast Basins of Los Angeles (a developed area with considerable available data), and (2) a portion of the eastern part of the San Joaquin Valley (agriculture). The pilot studies include the use and screening of all available well logs from the Department of Water Resources, incorporation and evaluation of the Department of Health Services water supply well water quality database, and development of detailed conceptual models of the subsurface hydrogeology. The results of the pilot studies will be used to develop alternative approaches and prioritization, options, and associated resource requirements for implementation of different levels of comprehensive groundwater monitoring in California

The cost and sources of funding for a statewide comprehensive groundwater monitoring plan has not yet been developed. Although up to \$50 million has been identified for this program in Proposition 50, the fate of Prop 50 is uncertain. For more information on AB599, visit the SWRCB website at <http://www.swrcb.ca.gov/cwphome/land/gama/webpages/ab599hom.htm>

Bills Pending Before the Governor

California's Legislative Session ended September 1 with nearly 3,000 bills presented to the Governor for signature or veto. Among them are a number of

critical water measures including California's 4.4 Plan, Cal-Fed, groundwater contamination and desalination studies. The following is a brief recap of some of the activity; the Governor has until October 1, 2002 to sign or veto legislation:

- 💧 SB 1822 (Sher) - Public water systems: public health goals: perchlorate. Calls for the State to set a limit on perchlorate allowable in groundwater supplies and begin enforcement by 2004. The Governor has signed SB 1822 into law.
- 💧 SB 1348 (Brulte) - Requires DWR to consider whether an urban water supplier is implementing water demand reduction measures in its urban water management plan in order to qualify for consideration for Prop 13 funding. The Governor has signed SB 1348 into law.
- 💧 AB 2606 (Harman) - Requires the State to evaluate public health risks and establish an evaluation process for groundwater recharge injection projects. The Governor has signed AB 2606 into law.
- 💧 SB 1938 (Machado) — Groundwater management: state funding. Provides that a groundwater management plan must contain certain specified elements in order to qualify for State funding.
- 💧 SB 1384 (Costa) — Water supply planning. Adds new requirements for urban water management plans.

- 💧 SB 482 (Kuehl) - Provides for a narrow amendment of Fully Protected Species requirements for areas impacted by the San Diego-Imperial and other QSA-related water transfers.
- 💧 SB 1653 (Costa) — California Bay-Delta Act - Creates, until January 1, 2006, a 20-member California Bay-Delta Authority (CBDA) in the Resources Agency as the governance organization overseeing implementation of the California Bay-Delta Program.
- 💧 SB 1672 (Costa) — Integrated Regional Water Management Planning Act of 2002. Establishes a process by which regional water management groups may develop integrated regional water management plans.
- 💧 AB 2717 (Hertzberg) — Desalination. This bill requires the State prior to July 1, 2003, to report to the Legislature on potential

opportunities and impediments and need for state involvement in seawater and brackish water desalination and convenes a working group.

- 💧 ACA 11 (Richman, Canciamilla) - Infrastructure Funding Constitutional amendment, requiring voter approval, that would dedicate 1-3% of general fund revenue growth to funding infrastructure projects, including water, in positive fiscal years.

Proposition 50: Clean Water and Coastal Protection Bond of 2002.

This \$3.44 billion bond will appear on the November 5, 2002 ballot, having been crafted and placed by the Nature Conservancy, Planning and Conservation League, Natural Resources Defense Council, Clean Water Action and the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California. Approximately 44% of the bond is dedicated to land acquisition with

remaining funds dedicated to water supply (27%), water pollution (14%), drinking water (12.6%) and water security (1%). Of the Clean Water and Water Quality category, roughly \$100 million is allocated for restoration and protection of groundwater quality. As noted earlier, an additional \$50 million is set aside for statewide groundwater monitoring funding as part of the AB 599 process from the Integrated Regional Water Management category. More funding of groundwater programs is possible under one of many competitive grant program funding categories. 💧