

HYDRO VISIONS

GROUNDWATER RESOURCES ASSOCIATION OF CALIFORNIA

Legislative Corner

The California Legislative Report (as of February 1, 2002)

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One of the long-term objectives of the GRA is to become an active player in statewide water policy on the development, management and protection of the State's groundwater resources. Last year, we began the process of introducing GRA and its mission to key legislators and staff in Sacramento. We will continue the effort this year to raise GRA's profile by participation in selected stakeholder processes affecting groundwater and California water law and policy. In addition, we are planning a day in Sacramento for the membership to meet directly with legislators to express membership perspectives and work on building confidence in the technical and policy expertise of the GRA.

On an administrative level, we will be tracking legislation of interest to the GRA and working on a set of Legislative Guidelines to be reviewed and adopted by the organization. We will be working with interested members to coordinate visits to Sacramento; in the meantime, if you have any questions or comments, or, if your organization has any bills you would like to add to our watch list, please contact Jennifer Carbuccia at (619) 702-6100 or jcarbuccia@hatchparent.com.

March 5, 2002 Ballot:

Proposition 40 - Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Bond: This measure asks the public for bonding authority for \$2.6 billion to finance programs for the acquisition, development, restoration,

protection, preservation, and interpretation of park, coastal and agricultural land, air, and historical resources in the state. Proposition 40 has amassed an impressive array of endorsements by the environmental and agricultural communities, business and labor, as well as civic and cultural organizations. If passed, the measure will provide \$1.788 billion for allocation by the Legislature for non-water specific parks, historic resources and clean air and land issues. Water-related funding includes: \$375 million for the protection of water resources and \$445 million for conservancy issues. Check out the specifics for yourself at: www.VoteYeson40.org.

Legislative Issues Pending this Year

AB 599 (Liu), The Groundwater Monitoring Act of 2001,

Implementation: The law establishes an advisory committee to the interagency task force. GRA will continue to work with the authors and other stakeholders to ensure appropriate representation.

Water Bonds: There may be a battle of the water bonds as we head toward the November election. The first, titled Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Act of 2002, has been approved for signature collection and does not have to be voted on by the legislature. This bond was created and is supported by many members of the environmental community and Metropolitan Water District of Southern California. At a recent hearing on the bond, numerous

water districts, business, farm and development interests expressed concerns with the measure for a variety of reasons including but not limited to the lack of funds allocated to groundwater and conjunctive use projects or other supply enhancements. Senator Costa has proposed drafting a bond measure over the next several weeks that will include all stakeholder participation. The Costa process will afford an opportunity for GRA to be at the table ensuring groundwater programs are not neglected.

AB 954 (Kelley), the California Water Supply Reliability and Protection Bond, is also in the mix. This bond is specifically focused on funding Groundwater supplies and storage areas, with focus points on conjunctive use, protection and clean-up of contamination. This measure, which is heading to the Senate seems to have the nod of some of the legislative leadership but will have a long hard road in this fiscal environment. GRA will support this and similar measures which commit to and fund protecting our groundwater resources.

Impacts of the State's fiscal crisis cannot be understated, with shortfall estimates falling between \$14 billion and \$30 billion dollars; for this reason, it is unlikely many bills with costs or fees associated will move, and that the most pressing concern will be guarding against program and initiative cuts. This reality is also likely to affect the support of the Governor on any bond measures, as it is generally felt that he is unlikely to commit to any more than \$15 million in bond measures on the November ballot.

SB 469 (Alpert): Water quality: total maximum daily loads. Requires the State Water Resources Control Board to adopt guidelines for the listing and delisting of impaired waters by July 1, 2003. Specifically, requires guidelines for implementing total maximum daily load programs and issuing or promulgating total maximum daily loads (TMDL) as required by the Clean Water Act. Also requires the state board to meet existing deadlines for the control of water quality when amending plans for the adoption a TMDL. This bill codifies two of the consensus recommendations of a state board advisory group convened to assist in the drafting and implementation of TMDLs. There is currently no opposition to this bill, and GRA will assist in its passage.

Other Related Activity:

Other legislative activity is expected to focus on fully protected species legislation likely to be authored by Senator Kuehl, the Colorado River 4.4 Plan, bills to strengthen water conservation requirements, and further

water quality/contaminant bills including MTBE. We will continue to monitor other bills that pertain to groundwater resources. Be sure to keep an eye on the website for additional updates or Calls to Action.

2001 in Review

While much of the activity during the last legislative year was focused on energy issues, a number of significant bills effecting water and groundwater became law focusing on contaminants, realistic water supply planning and water supply funding. Below are the bills numbers and subject. A more detailed description of these bills can be accessed via our website www.grac.org with direct links to the Official Bill Links:

Groundwater and Contamination: AB 599 (Liu). Groundwater Monitoring; AB 378 (Calderon). Water Quality: Groundwater Clean-up; SB 351 (Ortiz). Drinking water: Hexavalent Chromium Standard; SB 463 (Perata). Drinking Water Standards: Arsenic.

Realistic Water Supply Planning: SB 672 (Machado). Water Management Plans; AB 901 (Daucher). Water Supply Planning; SB 610 (Costa). Water Supply Planning; SB 221(Kuehl). Land Use and Water Supply Planning.

Water Program Funding : SB 23 (Costa). Cal Fed and AB 1602 (Keeley). Water and Park Bond (Now Prop 40 on the March 2002 Ballot)

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