

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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New well registration program aims to protect Monterey County groundwater

All well owners are asked to register by Jan. 31, 2026

SALINAS, Calif. — The Monterey County Water Resources Agency (MCWRA) and the Salinas Valley Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency (SVBGSA) launched a new well registration program to better understand and protect groundwater resources in the Salinas Valley. All well owners are asked to register their wells for free by Jan. 31, 2026.

The program, approved by the Monterey County Board of Supervisors earlier this year, is part of a statewide requirement under California’s Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA), which calls for all groundwater basins to be monitored to ensure long-term sustainability for all users. The new registration effort focuses on smaller residential wells, which are often the most vulnerable during periods of declining groundwater levels. However, all types of wells are encouraged to register.

“Private well owners are among those most at risk when groundwater levels drop,” said Ara Azhderian, MCWRA general manager. “By registering wells and understanding their characteristics, we can make sure local management decisions protect these wells and the people who depend on them.”

Residential wells are typically more shallow than agricultural or municipal wells, making them more susceptible to going dry when groundwater levels fall. Accurate data on where these wells are located helps local agencies better understand and manage groundwater resources, otherwise local agencies may be managing for the wrong conditions.

“The more we know about our groundwater conditions, the better we can protect the shared resource,” said Piret Harmon, SVBGSA general manager. “This program is not about imposing new burdens on groundwater users. It’s about making sure local data supports local solutions.”

Under the legal requirements of SGMA, every groundwater basin in California must account for all groundwater users and uses. Well registration is a critical step in building that understanding. MCWRA and SVBGSA are partnering to improve the collection and storage of regional groundwater data through the Groundwater Monitoring Program (GMP).

The GMP includes well registration, along with groundwater level, groundwater pumping and groundwater quality monitoring for seawater intrusion. This data will help refine groundwater models, improve monitoring accuracy, and inform the sustainable management plans that guide local decision-making.

Participation is also an opportunity for residents to stay informed and engaged in how groundwater is managed. Public meetings and updates are available through the SVBGSA website (www.svbgsa.org), where residents can learn more about the monitoring program and upcoming opportunities for community input.

“This is a local program, designed by and for Monterey County residents,” Azhderian said. “Groundwater conditions vary across California, which is why the law empowers local agencies to craft solutions that make sense for their communities.”

For more information and to register your well, visit <https://svbgsa.org/gmp/>.

About the Monterey County Water Resources Agency

The Monterey County Water Resources Agency manages water resources sustainably while minimizing impacts from flooding for present and future generations. Prior to being formally established in 1991, the Monterey County Water Resources Agency (MCWRA) was the Monterey County Flood Control and Water Conservation District, established in 1947 and organized as a division of the Public Works Department of the County of Monterey. MCWRA provides services related to the control of flood and storm waters in Monterey County, conservation, protection of water quality, reclamation of water and the exchange of water. It is a regional leader in water resource management through demonstrated knowledge, integrity and the quality of its actions. Learn more: <https://www.countyofmonterey.gov/government/government-links/water-resources-agency>.

About the Salinas Valley Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency

The Salinas Valley Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency (SVBGSA) is dedicated to protecting and sustaining groundwater resources that support the people, communities and economy of Monterey County. Groundwater is essential not only for agriculture to thrive, but also for homes, businesses and the environment. Through the development and implementation of Groundwater Sustainability Plans for each of six subbasins in the Salinas Valley, SVBGSA is advancing projects and management actions that address critical challenges — from enhancing groundwater recharge and halting seawater intrusion to improving water efficiency and promoting collaborative basin-wide planning.

Established in 2017 under California’s Sustainable Groundwater Management Act, SVBGSA is committed to inclusive, science-based decision-making and active community engagement to ensure a reliable groundwater future for all users in the Salinas Valley. Learn more at www.svbgsa.org and on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).

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