SVBGSA Groundwater Sustainability Plan Amendments for January 2027 submittal

Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) Amendments

Under the California Water Code, Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs) must evaluate their progress toward achieving the goals of their Groundwater Sustainability Plans (GSPs) at least once every five years through a Periodic Evaluation. In addition, GSAs may prepare a GSP Amendment when significant or material changes to a GSP or its implementation are needed under the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA).

The Salinas Valley Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency (SVBGSA), is preparing Periodic Evaluations and GSP Amendments for 6 subbasins for submission to the California Department of Water Resources. This work is being done in coordination with the Marina Coast Water District GSA in the Monterey Subbasin and 180/400-Foot Aquifer Subbasin, the Monterey County GSA in the 180/400-Foot Aquifer Subbasin, and the Arroyo Seco GSA in the Forebay Subbasin,

Periodic Evaluations are due for 5 of the 6 SVBGSA subbasins in January 2027. SVBGSA is also preparing a Periodic Evaluation and Amendment 2 to the 180/400-Foot Aquifer Subbasin GSP to align the evaluation schedule across all Salinas Valley subbasins and enable the GSAs to take an integrated Valley-wide approach to SGMA implementation. The 2027 GSP Amendments were prepared for the following primary reasons:

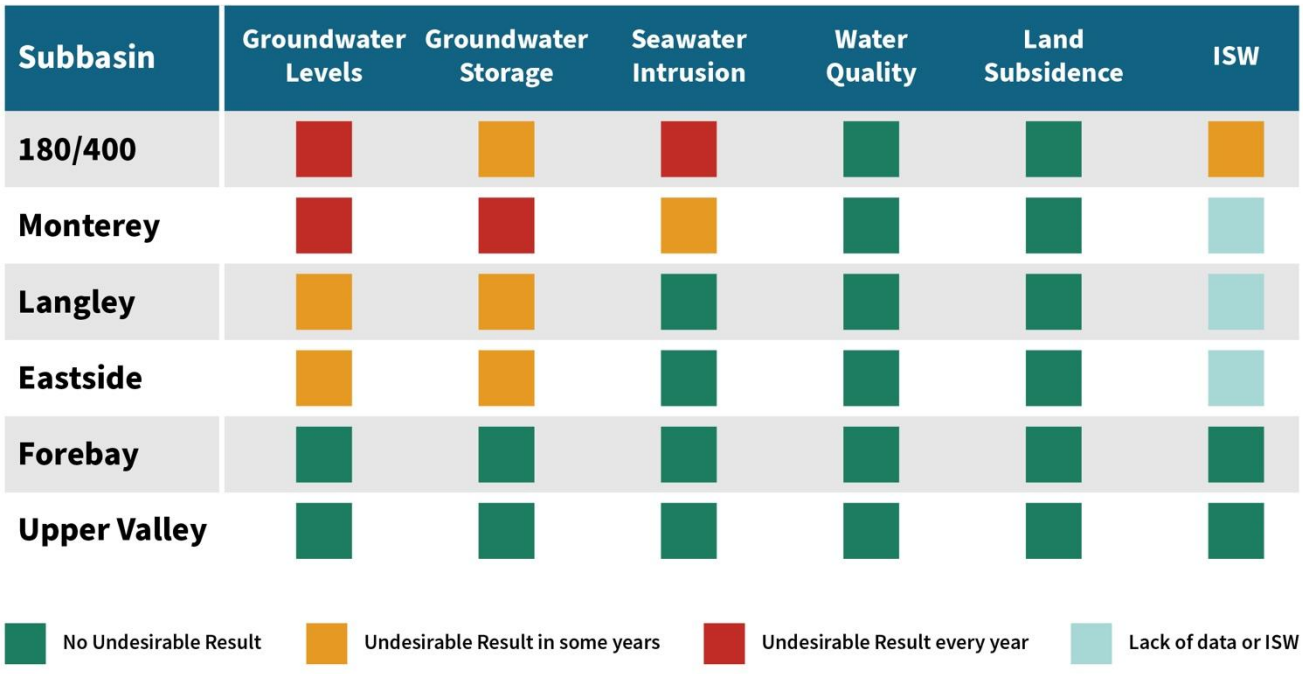
1) **Required Revisions** – Following approval of the 2022 Salinas Valley GSPs, the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) identified recommended corrective actions related to groundwater quality and interconnected surface water, among other topics. The 2027 GSP Amendments address these recommendations and incorporate associated revisions.
2) **Change to Sustainable Management Criteria (SMC)** –
    a. Water Quality SMC: 1 of the required revisions from DWR was to change the Water Quality SMC to include degradation caused by pumping, regardless of whether pumping is actively managed. Amendments incorporate the revised SMC to account for water quality analyses completed and provide clearer processes to determine Undesirable Results.
    b. Seawater Intrusion SMC: Additional updates are made to Seawater Intrusion SMC in the 180/400-Foot Aquifer Subbasin. The Measurable Objective goal is revised from Highway 1 and moved to the 2017 extent of the 500 mg/L chloride isocontour in the 180-Foot and 400-Foot Aquifers. This change aligns the Measurable Objective with the Minimum Threshold, which serves as the point of compliance. The revision reflects recent studies that conclude pushing seawater intrusion back to Highway 1 by 2040 is not achievable. For the Deep Aquifers, the goal is no seawater intrusion.
3) **New Data and Information** – Since adoption of the GSPs, five additional years of groundwater monitoring data have been collected, data gaps have been reduced, project feasibility studies have been completed, and analytical tools have improved. These new data and insights provide a more comprehensive understanding of subbasins conditions and will help GSAs make more informed groundwater management decisions.

4) **Project and Management Action (PMA) Feasibility Studies and Implementation Priorities** – Over the past five years, significant effort has been devoted to evaluating the feasibility of several PMA identified in the 2022 GSPs. The Amendments incorporate the results of these studies and update PMA descriptions accordingly. While retaining the broad suite of potential PMAs identified in the original GSPs, the Amendments also identify an integrated set of PMAs to prevent Undesirable Results across the Salinas Valley, as well as priority and contingency PMAs for each subbasin. These priority actions are intended to help achieve Measurable Objectives, mitigate overdraft, and provide a more defined pathway for SGMA implementation.

Key Findings from the 2027 Periodic Evaluations

- Groundwater pumping across all six subbasins has averaged 444,400 AF/yr; higher in dry years and lower in wet years.
- Groundwater levels declined during the 2021-2022 dry years and then rebounded afterwards, largely due to the wet 2023 and decreases in pumping
- Groundwater levels were below minimum thresholds in the Deep Aquifers and Corral de Tierra Area throughout the past five years
- Seawater intrusion continues to advance
- Monitoring networks continue to provide sufficient coverage for sustainability evaluation.
- DWR recommended corrective actions have been addressed.

Undesirable Results have occurred for the following:



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Summary of Salinas Valley GSP Amendments Revisions by Chapter

- **1-3:** Revised Introduction, Communications, and Plan Area to reflect GSA efforts
- **4:** Incorporated new data and analyses on subbasin to update Hydrogeologic Conceptual Model
- **5:** Revised historical and GSP baseline conditions where conceptualization changed
- **6:** Developed updated water budgets with revised models
- **7:** Updated monitoring networks
- **8:** Revisions to SMC (Water Quality and SWI as noted above)
- **9:** Revised PMA descriptions according to feasibility studies
- **10:** Added Valley-wide Integrated Implementation Strategy section and subbasin-specific section with priority PMAs to provide clear pathway for avoiding Undesirable Results, reaching groundwater sustainability goals, and mitigating overdraft.
- **To be added:** implementation schedule and budget.

Salinas Valley GSP Amendments and Periodic Evaluations Timeline

Date	Milestone
January-November 2026	Subbasin committee meetings to review and discuss information and data to be included in GSP Amendments and Periodic Evaluations
September 18, 2026	Draft GSP Amendments published; 90-day notice sent to cities and county
October 8, 2026	SVBGSA Board Meeting to discuss and provide input on Draft GSP Amendments
November 18, 2026	Comments on Draft GSP Amendments due for consideration at December Board meeting
December 10, 2026	SVBGSA Board Meeting to review Periodic Evaluations; and to review the comments on Draft GSP Amendments and provide input on staff recommendations for addressing the comments.
January 14, 2027	SVBGSA Board Meeting to approve the Periodic Evaluations and to conduct public hearing for adopting GSP Amendments.
January 23, 2027	Submittal of 2027 Periodic Evaluations and GSP Amendments to DWR

Getting Involved in SGMA Implementation

SVBGSA engages with the public through Board, Advisory Committee, and Subbasin Committee meetings, as well as other outreach activities. Opportunities for engagement are provided through public meetings, website updates, stakeholder coordination efforts, and public review and comment periods associated with SGMA implementation activities.

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Information regarding meetings, annual reports, groundwater conditions, and SGMA implementation is available at: www.svbgsa.org

Subscribe to receive project updates, meeting notices, and SGMA-related information through the SVBGSA website. Agendas, presentations, reports, and additional groundwater management information are also available online for public review.

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