



# Update on the development of a Groundwater Monitoring Program ordinance and fee

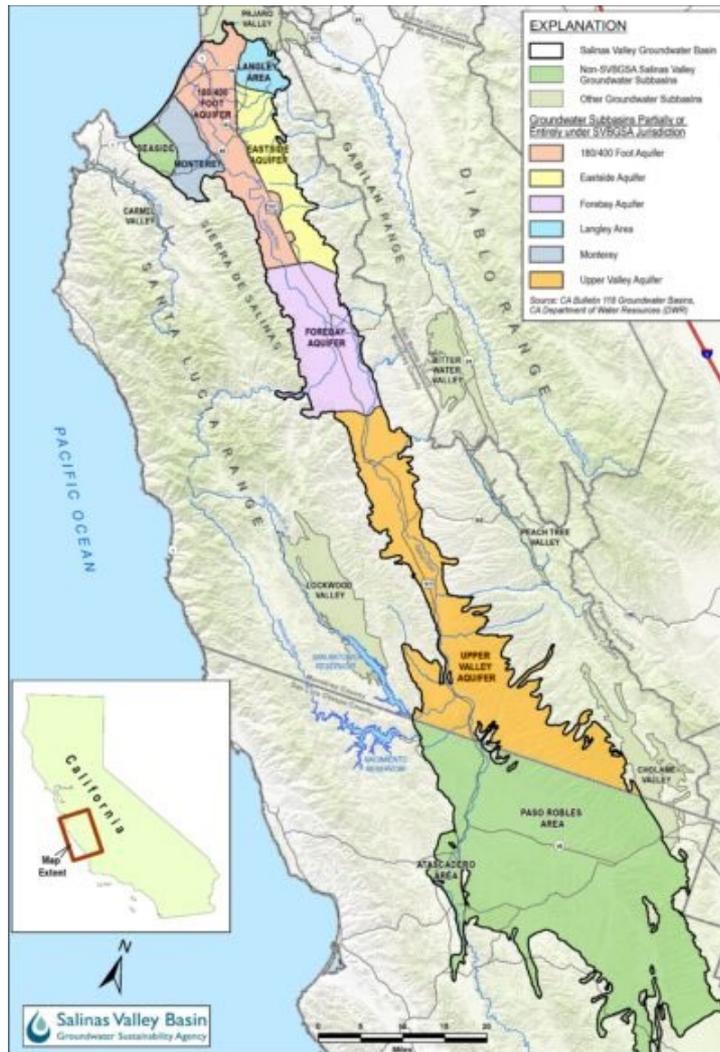


# Committee and BOD History

- May 2024 – Update provided to the Personnel & Administration Committee
- July 2024 – Update provided to the Planning Committee
- July 2024 – Update provided to the Board of Directors

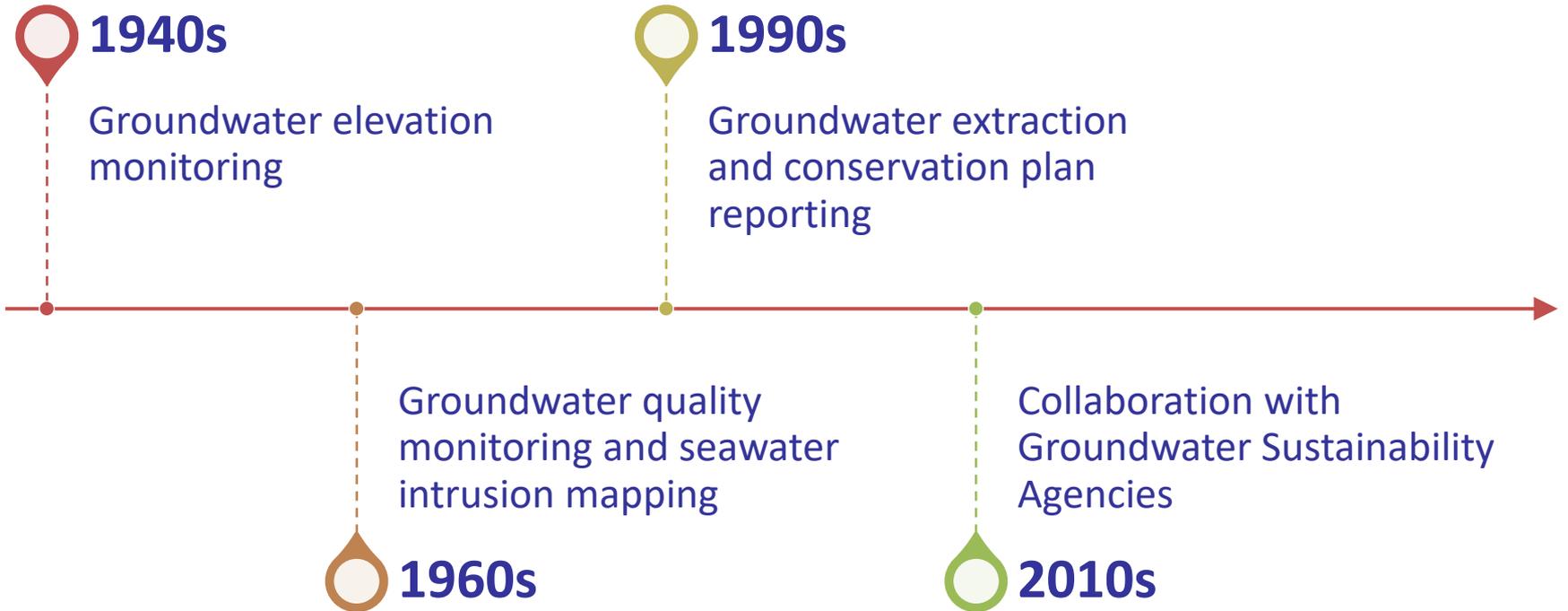


# Salinas Valley Groundwater Basin



- Extends from Pacific Ocean in the northwest to the San Luis Obispo County line in the south
- Divided into subbasins defined by the State of California, Department of Water Resources (Bulletin 118)

# Agency History of Groundwater Monitoring



# Sustainable Groundwater Management Act

- SGMA is three state acts, signed into law in 2014
  
- SGMA mandates:
  - Groundwater sustainability by 2040 or 2042
  - Department of Water Resources:
    - Establishes and prioritizes groundwater basins
    - Approves plans and monitors progress
    - Determines sustainability
  - Formation of Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs)
  - Development of Groundwater Sustainability Plans
  - **Monitoring of groundwater level, quality, and usage**

# Groundwater Monitoring Program (GMP)

- Establishes one cohesive groundwater monitoring program to support today's regulatorily driven monitoring requirements;
- Leverages ~75 years of Agency expertise;
- Advances WRA Strategic Planning Goals:
  - Goal B: Planning & New Project Strategies 2, 5, & 7
  - Goal C: Financial Sustainability Strategies 2 & 6
  - Goal D: Core Services Strategies 1, 2, 3, & 5
- Supports the local GSA efforts;
- Creates opportunity to consolidate groundwater monitoring efforts under one entity;

# Groundwater Monitoring Program (GMP)

- Currently focused on consolidating and expanding current groundwater monitoring efforts within the Salinas Valley Groundwater Basin;
- Could be utilized to support other groundwater management efforts:
  - Environmental Health
  - Regional Water Quality Control Board
  - GSAs outside of the Salinas Valley Basin
- Proposes to repeal 3 existing well registration & extraction monitoring ordinances and adopt 1 new ordinance;
- Proposes establishing a Prop 26 Regulatory Fee per well;
- Proposes to support Salinas Valley Basin GSA (SVBGSA) request for expanded groundwater extraction and well registration data.

# Expansion of Groundwater Extraction Reporting

- The Agency and Salinas Valley Basin GSA (SVBGSA) are collaborating to meet regulatory requirements under SGMA.
- The Agency and SVBGSA began stakeholder outreach on expansion of groundwater extraction reporting in Fall 2023 and it is ongoing.
- Outreach to-date has included:
  - Agency Committees
  - Agency Board of Directors
  - Agency Board of Supervisors
  - SVBGSA Board of Directors
  - Stakeholder groups

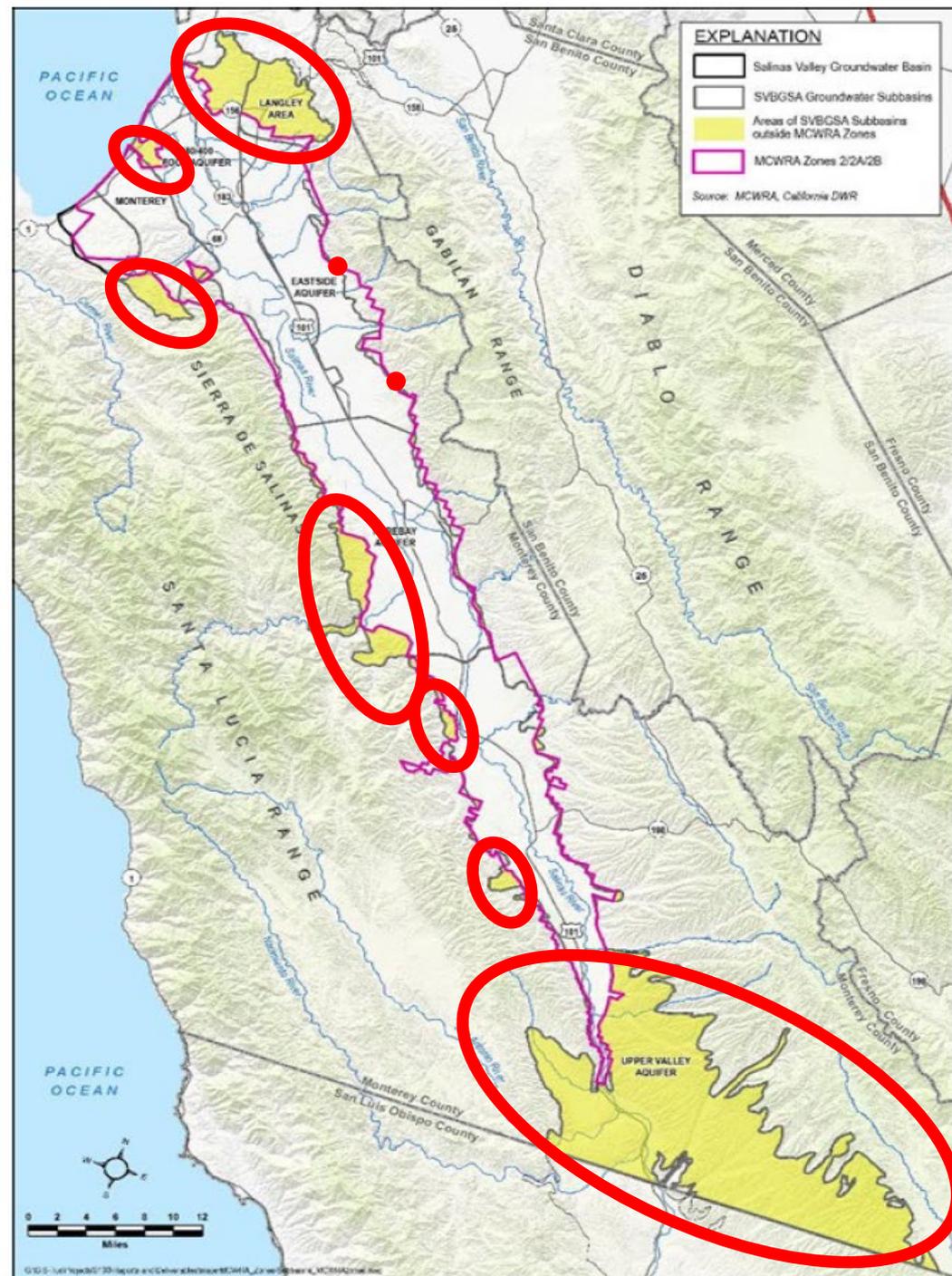
# Why Expand Groundwater Extraction Reporting?

- Meets the regulatory data needs of SVBGSA.
  - 5-year GSP evaluations due
    - 180/400 subbasin: January 2025
    - Other 5 subbasins: January 2027
- Helps address DWR's Recommended Corrective Actions.
- Aligns Agency's groundwater extraction data collection boundaries and Salinas Valley Groundwater Basin boundaries.

# Red Circles are Outside of Current Groundwater Extraction Reporting Program

## Implementation Priorities for 2024-2027

- ✓ 180/400 due to GSP 5-Year Evaluation deadline
- ✓ Registration of unregistered wells
- ✓ New extraction reporting in all areas to fill data gaps
- ✓ Enhancements and other cooperative opportunities



# What changes are being proposed?

## ▪ Well Registration

- Under current ordinance, wells with a discharge pipe smaller than 3-inches in diameter do not need to register with the Agency.
- **With expanded program, all wells will need to register with the Agency.**
  - Known wells will not need to re-register.
  - Changes to well construction or ownership will need to be reported.

# What changes are being proposed?

## ▪ Extraction Reporting

- Currently, wells with a discharge pipe smaller than 3-inches in diameter do not report extraction data.
- **With expanded program:**
  - Reporting will be required from all wells using more than 2 acre-feet/year in all areas under SVBGSA jurisdiction, consistent with SGMA.
  - Enhancements will change the reporting period.



# The Groundwater Monitoring Program (GMP) is:

- To meet the regulatory needs of the SVBGSA for data collection within their jurisdiction.
- Registration of wells not previously registered.
- New groundwater extraction reporting requirements.
- Improved processes and greater efficiencies.
- Opportunity to meet the future needs of others.

# Bringing it all Together

- The proposed new ordinance would:
  - Affirm the Agency’s authority to perform groundwater monitoring throughout the County;
  - Establish opportunity for other entities with groundwater regulatory responsibilities to request service from the Agency;
  - Establish a new regulatory fee to cover the Groundwater Monitoring Program.

# Bringing it all Together

- New approach to cost allocation and recovery
  - Historically, Agency costs have been predominately allocated and recovered on a *per-acre basis*.
  - Future GMP costs are proposed to be allocated and recovered on a *per-well basis*.
    - Reporting requirements are driven by the number of wells, not the number of acres.

# Bringing it all Together

- The Ordinance establishes ***broad authority*** for the Agency.
- A Service Agreement will establish the ***terms and conditions*** for the Agency to provide groundwater monitoring service to a requesting entity.
- Task Orders will define the ***specific work and proposed cost*** of an entities request.
- Resolution(s) adopted at least annually by the Supervisors ***will approve*** proposed Agency work, related costs, and a resultant, annual regulatory fee.

# Next Steps

- Working with County Counsel and the SVBGSA, the Agency will continue stakeholder outreach to inform the new draft Ordinance.
- Working with the SVBGSA, the Agency will seek to refine its specific requests for groundwater monitoring deliverables and methods.
- The Agency is developing its own manual for the Groundwater Monitoring Program.
- The regulatory fee nexus study has begun.

# GMP Expansion Proposed Timeline

WELL REGISTRATION & GEMS EXPANSION TIMELINE															
Nov '23	Dec '23	Jan '24	Feb '24	Mar '24	Apr '24	May '24	Jun '24	Jul '24	Aug '24	Sep '24	Oct '24	Nov '24	Sep '25	Nov '25	
OUTREACH															
			WELL REGISTRATION & GEMS EXPANSION PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT												
					ORDINANCE, AGREEMENTS, & POLICIES DEVELOPMENT						<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: fit-content;">                     Sep. 10 &amp; 24, 2024                      Two readings of new ordinance for BOS                 </div>				
					<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: fit-content;">                     Aug. 19, 2024                      BOD considers recommendation to BOS                 </div>		POPULATE WELL REGISTRATION & GEMS EXPANSION DATABASE								
												EXTRACTION DATA DUE FOR CURRENT EXTENT			
											COLLECT EXTRACTION DATA IN FULL EXTENT (NEW + CURRENT)				
														REPORT EXTRACTION DATA FOR FULL EXTENT	



