

MEMORANDUM

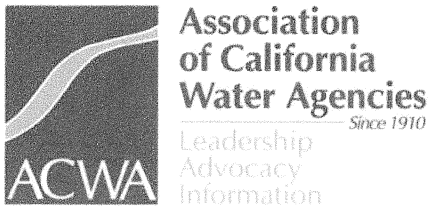
To: Members of the Kings County Water Commission

From: Brent Graham

Subj: Association of California Water Agencies' (ACWA) Groundwater Management Policy Principles

Date: February 23, 2009

Attached is ACWA Groundwater Management Policy Principles which were recently adopted by its Board of Directors. It was hammered out in the ACWA Groundwater Committee over the past six months. Comprised of both urban and agricultural representatives, it is significant that the ag representatives were able to get concurrence with the urban water representatives that the policy clearly state that groundwater is to remain under local control. With the recent adoption by the ACWA Board, this policy will weigh heavily as groundwater legislation that will, no doubt, be prevalent this year. Most of it will advocate state control of groundwater. ACWA, as the major statewide water organization, will be beneficial in supporting local control and opposing any legislation to the contrary.



Association of California Water Agencies Groundwater Management Policy Principles

“Groundwater – Invisible No More”

Groundwater is an invaluable resource for California and a critical asset in the state’s comprehensive water management portfolio. Groundwater management should be implemented throughout California, and should be done so consistent with the following policy principles.

1. Groundwater resources are best managed by local jurisdictions to effectively and efficiently manage water quality and supplies for beneficial uses. ACWA encourages and supports regional groundwater management strategies such as Integrated Regional Water Management Plans (IRWMP) and other regional partnerships.
2. Local management of groundwater resources requires accountability, stewardship and transparency; and appropriate local monitoring, measurement and reporting of groundwater basin activity to assure groundwater basin objectives are being achieved.
3. ACWA opposes state interference with existing legal rights to groundwater and believes that a state administered water rights system for groundwater would undermine effective groundwater management and local investments.
4. California’s groundwater resources are unique and diverse in physical characteristics, beneficial uses, water rights, legal and institutional governance and management structures, stakeholders and other features. One-size-fits-all state mandates are ineffective and counterproductive.
5. ACWA supports expansion of conjunctive management of surface water and groundwater supplies that contributes to the protection, reliability and sustainability of local, regional and statewide water supplies for water users and the environment. Such an expansion requires increased groundwater and surface storage, the re-operation of surface reservoirs as appropriate, and improved Delta conveyance.
6. Groundwater quality management is integral to optimizing California’s groundwater resources. It must be science-based and include improved data management, basin assessments, monitoring, reporting, protection and, where appropriate, remediation.
7. ACWA supports the use of potable, desalinated, recycled and storm waters for groundwater recharge, with appropriate water quality safeguards that protect beneficial uses.

8. Land use policies and regulations that identify, preserve and protect natural and artificial recharge and extraction capabilities are essential for sustainable groundwater management. Land use policies must consider and analyze impacts and potential impacts to groundwater quality.
9. ACWA supports statewide and regional regulatory consistency that acknowledges the diversity of groundwater resources to facilitate the achievement of local and statewide groundwater storage and basin utilization goals.
10. Groundwater management strategies must anticipate and adapt to the effects of climate change
11. Optimal groundwater management throughout California will require significant federal, state, regional, local and private investment in infrastructure and related facilities. ACWA further supports increased funding for groundwater research, monitoring, and other management programs.
12. ACWA encourages other statewide associations, regional entities and groundwater related organizations to educate and advocate for expanded and more effective groundwater management throughout California, and will help coordinate such activities.