

# Funding Options

Department of Environmental Resources  
Implementation of the Delta Mendota GSP

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# Overview

- The Delta Mendota (DM) Subbasin has been split into four (4) zones. Stanislaus County acts as the Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) for non-district 'white areas' within Zone three (Northern DM). Stanislaus County and Merced County have combined their GSA into the Northwestern (NW) DM GSA and have agreed to share cost responsibilities
- The Delta Mendota Subbasin (DM) Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) was adopted August 2024 with the associated Well Metering Monitoring and Reporting Program Guidelines (WMMRPG) and Pumping Reduction Plan (PRP) subsequent adoption in October 2024
  - Implementation of the GSP, WMMRPG, and PRP within the DM Subbasin set to begin immediately after (2025)
  - Merced and Stanislaus Counties have an agreement to be able to contract for services for implementation of the GSP. Water resources divisions within each respective county have agreed to each separately govern out of district areas within their areas of oversight.
  - DM GSP includes implementation of the Domestic Well Mitigation Program and funding of a joint Northern Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) group interest account to fund the northern regions portion of the fund
    - 1/7 equal split between northern committee members

# Funding Need

- Funding needs associated with GSP implementation
  - GSA Administration
  - GSP updates, initial development cost recovery, and implementation actions
  - Annual monitoring and reporting program administration and outreach
  - Pumping reduction plan implementation and workshops
  - Collection and analysis of groundwater data
  - Efforts to complete annual reports and studies
  - Proportionally fund the domestic well mitigation program

# Area under DER Oversight

	Parcels (#)	Owners	Acreage*
Exempt (less than 2.6 AFY**)	14	11	25
Exempt (less than 10 AFY)	3	3	22
Small Pumpers (less than 40 AFY permitted prior to 11/25/14)	57	25	1,712
All other pumpers (Agriculture)	31	19	3,620
All other pumpers (Industrial/Combined***)	20	14	230
All other 'dry' parcels	124	35	30,957
Federally owned parcels	13	1	4,890
<b>Total****</b>	<b>262</b>	--	<b>41,456</b>

\*Acreages have been rounded to the nearest full acre

\*\*Acre Feet per Year (AFY)

\*\*\*All parcels labeled Industrial/Combined are considered small pumpers or exempt following DER definition

\*\*\*\*All parcels, owners, and acreage values have been determined utilizing GIS and may not reflect actual totals. Owners with multiple parcels which fall into separate categories have been counted within each category and therefore an overall total has not been included

# Anticipated Costs Associated with DER Implementation

- The DM Well Mitigation Policy requires the Northern DM region to maintain a fund of 300K for well mitigation actions as they come up. Each member GSA is responsible for providing 1/7 of this cost (~\$42,858)
  - NW DM GSA (of which Stanislaus County is a member) will split the \$42,858 and Stanislaus County will be responsible for paying \$5,065 annually during FY26, FY27, and FY28 (for an estimated total of \$15,195)
    - These costs will be included in the Northern DM operating budgets and the DER will verify that sufficient funds are included in the Groundwater Program's Fiscal Year Adopted Budgets for this purpose
- Well registration costs associated with the WMMRPG and PRP implementation will include staff review and oversight – approximately 1 hour per well registration per year. Utilizing an hourly rate of \$137, and 245 non-exempt irrigated parcels (assuming one well for each) costs would equal ~\$33,565
- NW DM GSA expenses are:
  - 1/5 of the costs of the administration and legal costs associated with GSP implementation
  - 37.32 percent of other costs (based on acreage percentage share)
    - Stanislaus County is responsible for 95 percent of these costs while Merced County is responsible for the other 5 percent
  - Following budget actuals for FY21 through FY24 for the DM subbasin, GSP implementation contracts (specifically for coordinated actions which the County may be responsible for supporting) totals around \$150 – 170K annually
    - Coordinated level retains some coverage under SGMA implementation Round 1 and Round 2 SPA Grants which helps subsidize these costs

# Costs Recovery

- Well Registration Costs – following the Groundwater Ordinance and enforcement powers granted to Stanislaus County, the DER may consider a one-time well registration fee to cover administrative costs. Currently considering a fee of \$137 to cover the anticipated hour review time but considering a tiered approach based upon extraction volume
  - **Ch 9.36 Water Wells**
  - [§ 9.36.160 Fees](#). The board of supervisors may establish, by resolution, a schedule of fees for permits, applications and for other services and such schedule, when adopted, shall become a part hereof. A copy of any schedule of fees established by resolution of the board shall be kept on file in the office of the clerk of the board of supervisors. (Prior code §3-314)
- Potential avenues:
  - As authorized by Ordinance:
    - Service Fee Assessment (may require a Prop 218 investigation)
    - Fee based on volume of groundwater extracted
    - Annual permit fee per well/grower based on extracted volume
    - State grants associated with sustainability, resiliency, or water infrastructure which include an administrative element (if eligible)

# Timeline

- Funding option is anticipated to be in place or as close to set in place as possible by December 31, 2025
  - Outreach actions scheduled to begin early 2026
  - Funds will be collected by the end of 2026 to correspond with the deadline for meeting DM GSP and PRP goals
    - Funding options will continue to be assessed throughout the calendar year to determine whether there are new grant opportunities
    - Fee structure will be reviewed updated as needed to reflect changes to implementation costs