

April 9, 2026

CONTACT: Taylor Blakeslee
(661) 477-3385**Directors:****Chase Hurley**, Chair
Central DM GSAs Group**Jim Stilwell**, Vice Chair
Farmers WD GSA**Joe Hopkins**
Aliso WD GSA**Buddy Mendes**
Fresno County Mgmt. Area
A/B GSAs Group**John Weirsma**
SJREC GSAs Group**Ric Ortega**
Grassland GSAs Group**Vince Lucchesi**
Northern DM GSAs Group**Delta-Mendota Subbasin exits State Water Board intervention,
returns to DWR oversight**

The State Water Resources Control Board (Water Board) unanimously adopted a resolution on April 7, 2026, to return the Delta-Mendota Subbasin to the jurisdiction of the California Department of Water Resources (DWR). By avoiding a “probationary” designation, the subbasin’s growers will not be required to pay the state a \$300 fee to register their wells and then pay \$20 per acre foot pumped.

The Water Board’s decision follows the release of a March 2026 Water Board Staff Assessment which concluded that the subbasin's Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs) had made significant progress in addressing previously identified deficiencies through its revised, 2024 single Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP).

Prior to the vote, Water Board member Sean Maguire noted, “The metrics I think about, and that I’ve mentioned at a number of other probationary discussions, is: progress, not perfection is what we’re looking for. I think what we’ve seen here from the basin is a willingness to coordinate amongst 23 different groundwater sustainability agencies.”

Board Chair E. Joaquin Esquivel observed, “Delta-Mendota is the fourth subbasin to exit state intervention after groundwater agencies came together and coalesced around the common goal of achieving sustainability. I congratulate the agencies on their cooperation and partnership, which will be key to managing the subbasin’s groundwater in the future.”

The Water Board became involved in oversight for the Delta-Mendota Subbasin in March 2023, after DWR determined that the subbasin’s multiple GSPs did not meet the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act’s (SGMA’s) regulatory requirements. DWR referred the subbasin to the Water Board for further review under SGMA’s intervention provisions and a potential probationary status.

The State Water Board staff's recommendation was based on several critical updates made to the subbasin's revised GSP calling out unified management, drinking water protection, implementation of pumping reduction programs, and water quality monitoring improvements.

“The Water Board decision reflects the hard work of Delta-Mendota GSAs to find common ground and their commitment to using the best available science in reaching decisions,” said Chase Hurley, Chair of the Delta-Mendota Subbasin GSAs Joint Powers Authority. He continued, “We also appreciate the efforts of the Water Board staff to work with us to achieve this outcome.”

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