Water Board Groundwater Work Plan

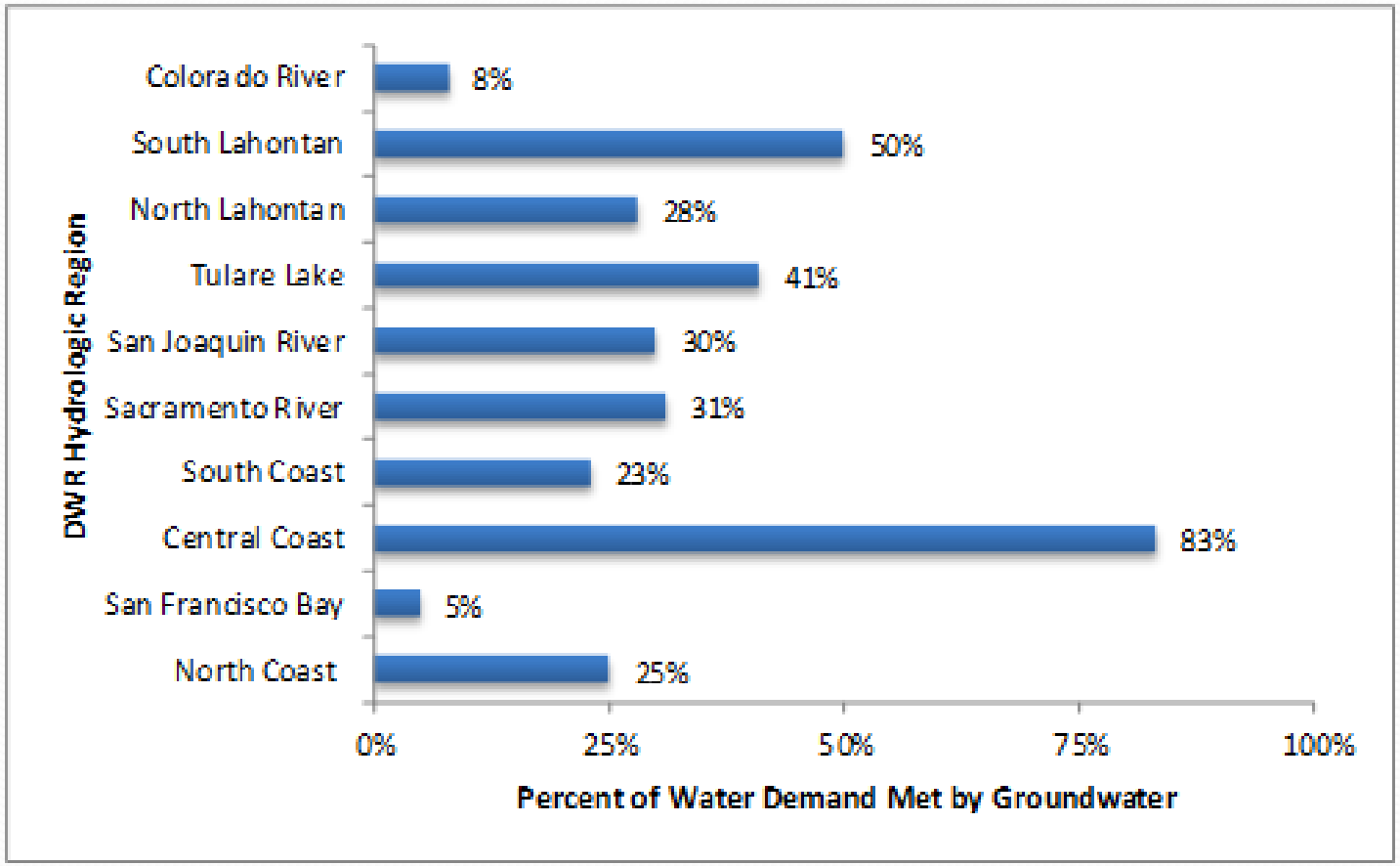
STATE WATER RESOURCES CONTROL BOARD
REGIONAL WATER QUALITY CONTROL BOARDS

November 5th, 2013

Quick Facts on California Water Groundwater Use

- Percentage of Urban and Agricultural Demands met with groundwater
  - Normal Year: 30 percent
  - Dry year: 40 percent
- About 9 million Californians (1 in 3) rely solely on groundwater to meet their needs
- On the Central Coast, 90 percent of drinking water comes from groundwater
- California uses more groundwater than any other state.
- Overdraft in the Central Valley is estimated to exceed 1 million acre feet per year
- Need will grow

% Water Demand Met by Groundwater



Source: DWR, Bulletin 118, 2003

Western States' Approach to Groundwater Management

Groundwater Management Components:	California	Arizona	Texas	Colorado	New Mexico
Statewide groundwater use permitting	—	X	—	X	X
Active management areas	—	X	X	X	X
Statewide policy—well data made public	—	X	X	X	X
Statewide policy—metering, measurement, and reporting requirements	—a	X	—	X	X

a SBX7 6 provides for statewide measurement (at the basin level), but not metering of water extraction.

Source: Legislative Analyst's Office, 2010

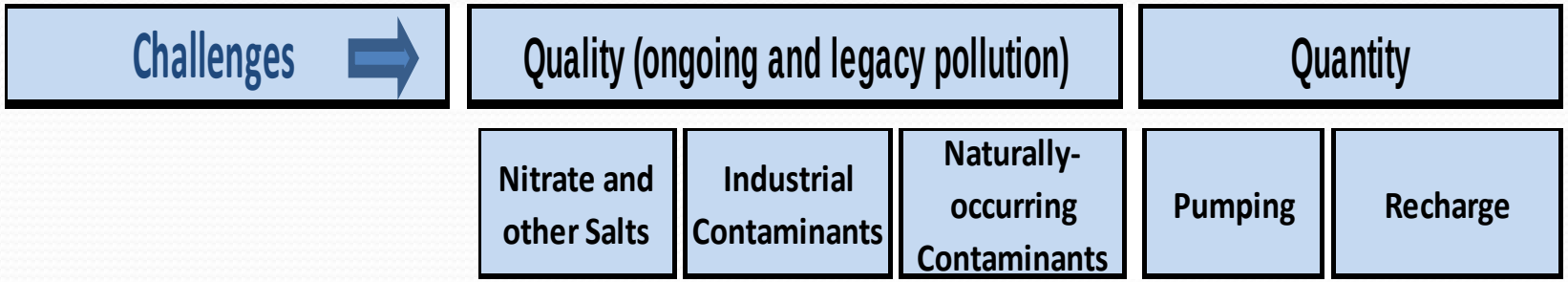
Groundwater Challenges

Quality:

- Industrial Contaminants (point source)
- Nitrates and Salts (non point source)
- Naturally-occurring Contaminants

Quantity:

- Pumping
- Recharge



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Deep trouble in the North County

The North County's primary water source is facing an unprecedented crisis. Over the past 30 years, levels in the underground aquifer have dropped precipitously, 80 to 100 feet or more in some areas.

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In rural North County, all is not well

Residents of the rural parts of San Luis Obispo County north of the Cuesta Grade bought or built their homes to enjoy the simple country life. But their dream of raising a family and maybe a few animals is in peril

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For decades, this city in California's agricultural heartland relied exclusively on cheap, plentiful groundwater and pumped increasingly larger amounts from an aquifer as its population grew.

But eventually, the water table dropped by more than 100 feet, causing some of Fresno's wells to cave in and others to slow to a trickle. The cost of replacing those wells and extracting groundwater ballooned by 400 percent.

"We became the largest energy demand in the region - $11 million a year for electricity just to run the pumps," said Martin Querin, manager of the city's water division, which supplies 550,000 residents.

Fresno is just one player in a water war that's quietly being fought underground. Throughout the Central Valley - one of the world's most productive agricultural regions - farmers, residents and cities have seen their wells go dry. Those who can afford it have drilled deeper wells that can cost hundreds of thousands of dollars.

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Wells Dry as Ground Water Lowers

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A new problem is welling up in Tehama C
the last year, groundwater levels have dr
dramatically, causing big problems for sc
homeowners.

Winter has been good to Harry Johnson,
rains have trickled down, filling up his well. But when he moved in to his home this sun

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'Cone of depression' is causing structural damage

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Posted: Saturday, October 6, 2012 12:00 am | *Updated: 5:04 am, Sat Oct 6, 2012.*

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A recent Record (AP) article, "Drought a boon for fix-it firms," addressed the serious problem of lack of water causing serious settling or "subsidence" damage to many homes. The article was from St. Louis, Mo., but could just as well been from Morada and San Joaquin County.

A large portion of San Joaquin County, including Linden and Morada, sits atop a vast void in our groundwater basin. This "cone of depression," or massive hole, is caused from groundwater depletion — a severe overdraft of our aquifer amounting to 200,000 acre-feet per year and growing. With little or no natural recharge or replenishment, and the continual overpumping by the city of Stockton, the cone of depression deepens.

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For those who find themselves so terribly offended by this and other letters, columns and articles published in the News-Sentinel, might I

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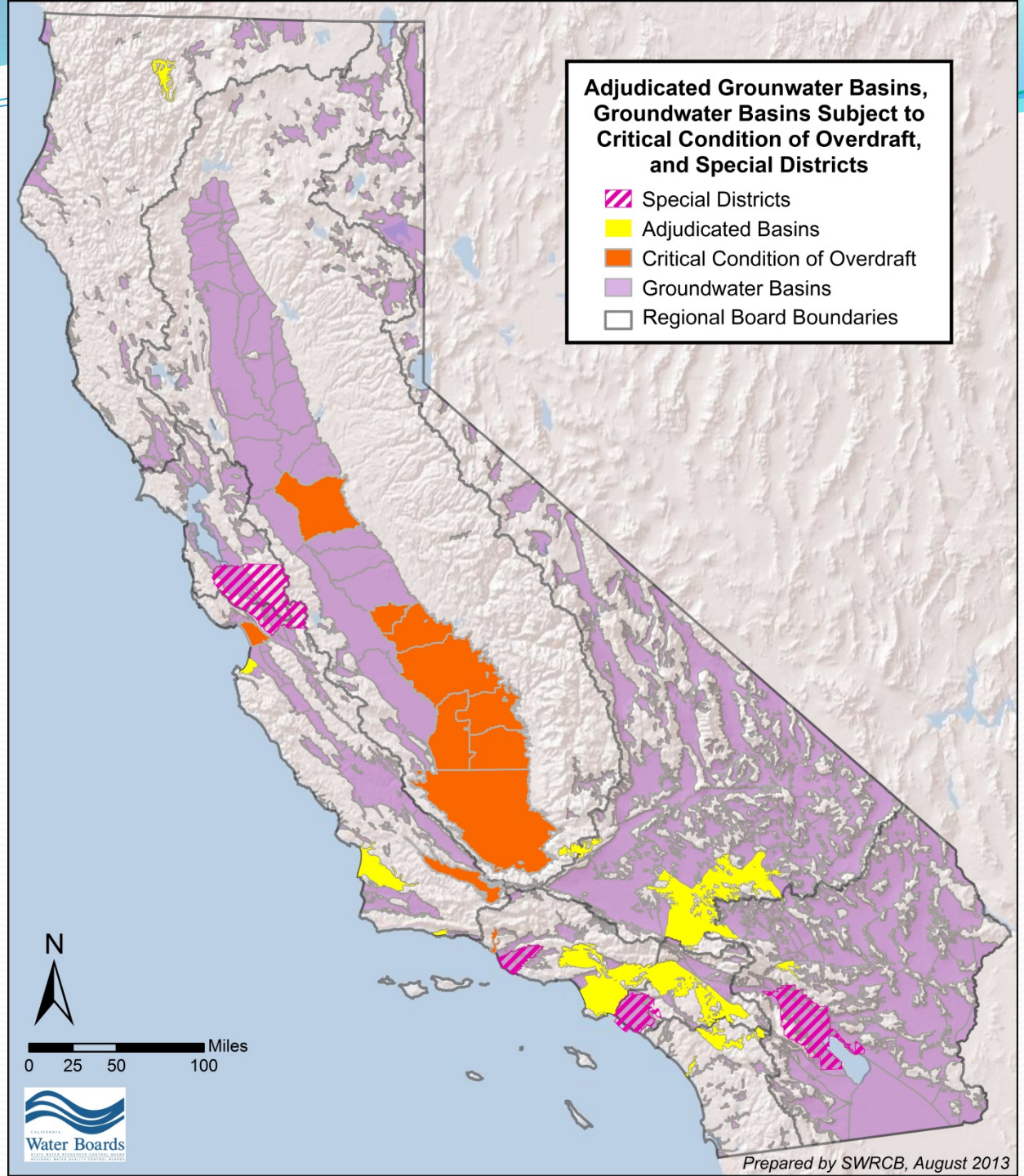
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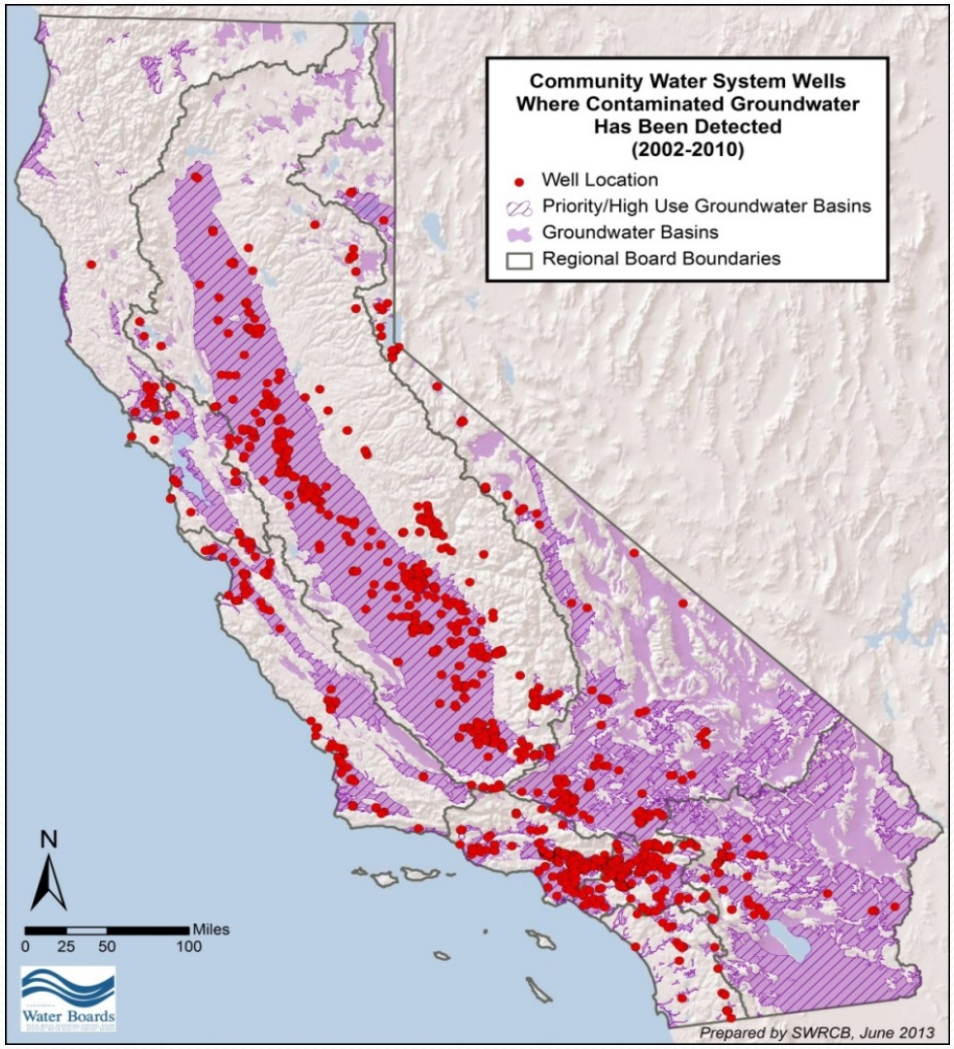
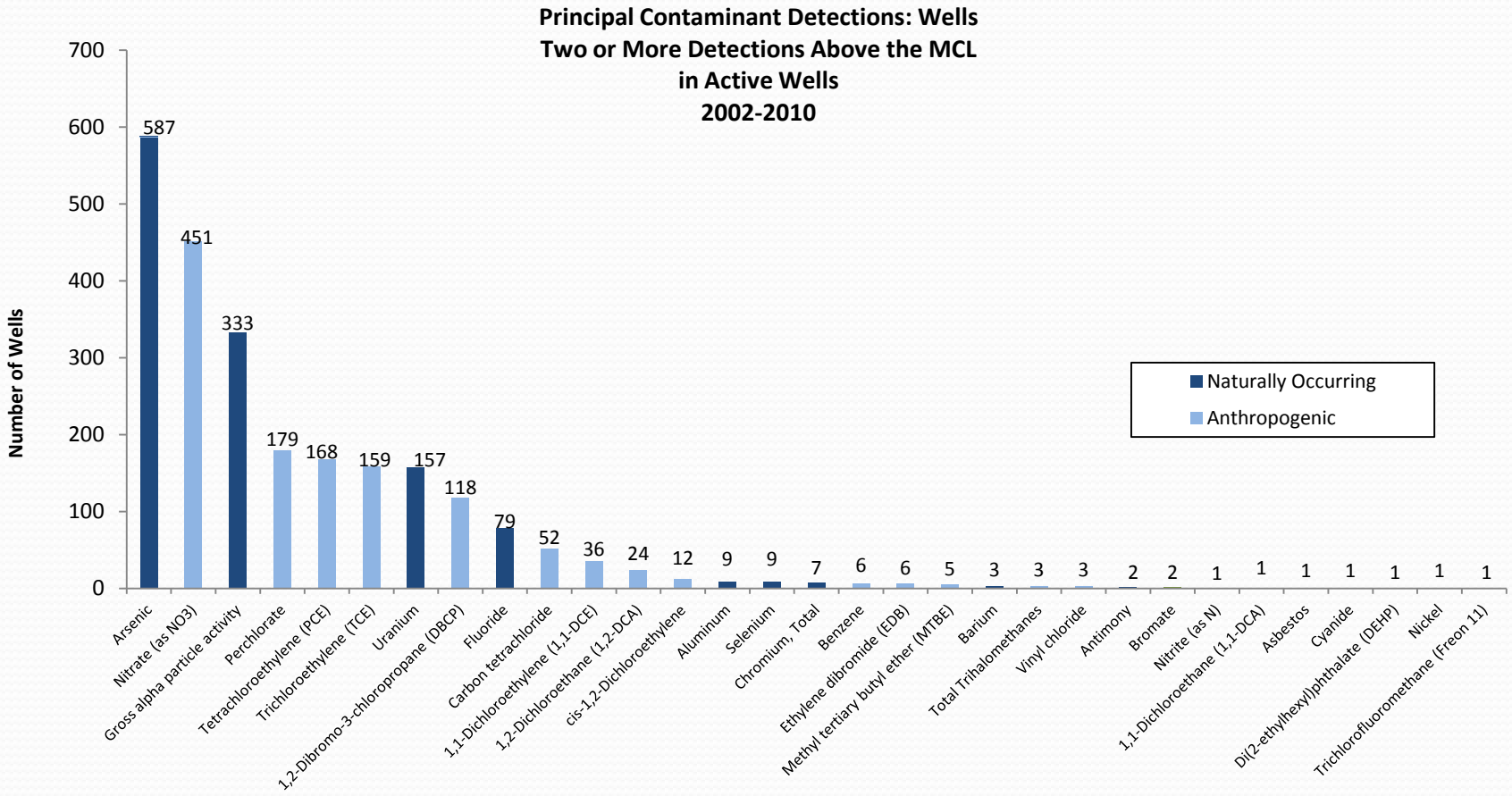
Water Boards
Prepared by SWRCB, August 2013

Community Well Systems Where Contamination has been Detected



Community Water Systems with Principal Contaminants Detected



Groundwater Workplan

- Align the Water Board's current groundwater protection efforts, the ongoing actions of other entities with groundwater management responsibilities, and potential actions that the Water Boards and other entities could pursue.

- Ensure that the Water Boards address the groundwater challenges that have the greatest potential to impact beneficial uses, focus limited resources on the most important groundwater problems, and facilitate more efficient local and regional groundwater management and provide support and oversight, where needed.

- Concept Paper Released September 2013

Key Concepts

- Water Boards are only part of the solution
- Local and regional agencies have many of the tools and authorities needed for effective management
- Where local and regional efforts are successful we should play a supporting role
- Focus on areas where problems exist and local management is insufficient or lacking

Our Vision: Regional Leadership

We envision a future where well-equipped local and regional groundwater management entities use monitoring information and thresholds to manage and maintain groundwater of sufficient quality at sustainable levels over the long-term; and where local and regional management efforts are backed-up by State support and oversight, where needed.

What's Needed

1. **Thresholds** for water level drawdown and water quality for impacted, vulnerable, and high-use basins;

2. Water quality and water level **monitoring** data and data management systems capable of determining if thresholds are being met and evaluating trends;

3. A governance structure with the planning, assessment, and **governance** mechanisms needed to prevent impacts before they occur, clean up contamination where it has occurred, and effectively **manage** groundwater at the basin scale to ensure drawdown and water quality thresholds are attained; and

4. **Funding** to support management, monitoring, oversight.

5. **Oversight** and **enforcement** in basins where ongoing management and control efforts are not protecting groundwater.

Groundwater Management Strategy

Challenges	Quality (ongoing and legacy pollution)			Quantity	
Key Management Elements	Nitrate and other Salts	Industrial Contaminants	Naturally-occurring Contaminants	Pumping	Recharge
Thresholds					
Monitoring and Assessment					
Governance and Management					
Funding					
Oversight and Enforcement					

Strategy

Key managment elements implemented at the local, regional or state level to address challenges where needed

Upcoming

Draft Concept Paper now available at

www.waterboards.ca.gov

Select "Groundwater" on home page

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- Small Dialogues
- Share Input with Board
- Refine Water Board activities
- Complete Workplan & implement

Asking for comments by December 6th, 2013