SOUTH FORK KINGS
GROUNDWATER SUSTAINABILITY AGENCY

Self Help Enterprises
SGMA Implementation and Impacts

SHE Technical Committee – September 5, 2025

GREEN ACRES
CONSULTING, INC.

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SGMA Review:

- Sustainable Groundwater Management Act passed in 2014
- Critically Overdrafted Basin Timeline (entire south SJV):
- Groundwater Sustainability Agencies were required to be formed by 2017
  - Only Public Agencies allowed to be part of GSA's
  - Exception for GSA formed by acts of legislation
  - Default responsibility for GSA falls to County if no GSA formed
- Groundwater Sustainability Plans (GSP) had to be Submitted and Implemented by 2020

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SGMA Undesirable Results

These "undesirable results" are defined as "significant and unreasonable" effects caused by groundwater conditions. They are:

1. **Chronic Lowering of Groundwater Levels**:
   This refers to a long-term decline in water levels that indicates a significant and unreasonable depletion of the groundwater supply.
2. **Reduction of Groundwater Storage**:
   This is the loss of the aquifer's capacity to hold water, often caused by the permanent compaction of soil and rock due to excessive pumping.
3. **Seawater Intrusion**:
   This occurs in coastal aquifers when the freshwater is over-pumped, allowing saltwater from the ocean to move in and contaminate the freshwater supply.
4. **Degraded Water Quality:**
   This includes the migration of contaminant plumes or other forms of water quality degradation that impair water supplies for drinking, agricultural, or other beneficial uses.
5. **Land subsidence:**
   This is the sinking of the ground surface caused by the compaction of the aquifer system from groundwater withdrawal. It can damage infrastructure like canals, roads, and wells.
6. **Depletions of interconnected surface water:**
   This is when groundwater pumping significantly and unreasonably reduces the flow of nearby rivers, streams, and wetlands, adversely impacting the environment and other beneficial uses of that surface water.

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SGMA GSP Requirements:

- **Administrative Information**
- **Basin Setting Report :**
  - Hydrologic Conceptual Model (HCM) describes Geology and Groundwater Flow
- **Sustainable Management Criteria**
  - Minimum Thresholds – *triggers undesirable results*
  - Measurable Objectives – *where the GSA should manage to*
- **Projects and Management Actions**
  - Groundwater Allocations
  - Groundwater Pumping Fees and Penalties
  - Well Drilling Restrictions
- **Plan Implementation**:
  - Schedule, Cost, and Strategy to Implement

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SGMA Implementation:

- **Outreach Plan** – *Potential Partnership with SHE*
- **Water Level and Quality Monitoring Networks** - *Potential Partnership with SHE*
- **Well and Water Quality Mitigation Plans** - *Potential Partnership with SHE*
- **Subsidence Monitoring**
- **Projects and Management Actions**:
  - Recharge Projects
  - Land Fallowing – AKA Multi Benefit Land Repurposing (MLRP)
  - Imported Water Supply
  - Pumping Restrictions and or Pumping Fees
  - Well Drilling Restrictions

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SGMA IMPACTS:

- Reduction in Cropland – Land Use Changes
  - PPIC Report Future of Agriculture in the SJV estimates 500,000 – 900,000 Acre reduction
- Increased Air Pollution from Fallowed Fields - UC Merced Report
- Reduction in Farm Revenue
  - UC Berkley Dr. Sunding Report -
    - $1.1 Billion in lost employee income per year
    - https://waterblueprintca.com/information/the-need/
- Increased Poverty in population centers focused on Agriculture

“Our Culture is Agriculture” – Aaron Fukuda