



## PRESS RELEASE

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### Merced Subbasin Groundwater Sustainability Plan Adopted

Merced, CA... Following more than two years of collaboration and public engagement, the three groundwater sustainability agencies (GSAs) in the Merced Subbasin (Merced Subbasin GSA, Merced Irrigation-Urban GSA, and Turner Island Water District GSA-1) have adopted the Merced Subbasin Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) and submitted it to the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) for review. The development and implementation of a GSP is a core requirement of California's Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA). SGMA requires GSPs be adopted for the basins deemed high priority and critically-overdrafted by January 31, 2020.

The three GSAs in the region collaborated on the creation of one GSP for the entire Merced Subbasin. The GSAs applied for and were awarded a \$1.5M grant from DWR to support the costs of developing the GSP. The GSP details how the Merced Subbasin will become sustainable over a 20-year timeframe through a combination of projects and management of groundwater pumping.

"This GSP will serve as a roadmap for managing groundwater locally and sustainably in the Merced Subbasin," said Donald Skinner, President of Turner Island Water District GSA-1. "The goal is to bring our basin into a sustainable balance by 2040."

Throughout the GSP development, stakeholder and public meetings were held to provide information, report progress, and gather feedback.

"In developing the GSP, we were committed to an open and transparent process. The stakeholders in this basin have a long history of working together on water issues. Their engagement is critical to improving groundwater management in the basin," said Hicham Eltal, Chair of the Merced Irrigation-Urban GSA.

The GSAs now move into the implementation phase of the GSP, which will involve implementation of projects and management actions, ongoing stakeholder engagement, coordination with neighboring basins, and monitoring of basin groundwater conditions.

"We recognize challenges lie ahead in reducing the use of groundwater in the basin and protecting this vital resource," acknowledged Bob Kelley, Chair of the Merced Subbasin GSA. "We look forward to continuing to work together to address the basin's challenges for the benefit of all groundwater users."

The Merced Groundwater Sustainability Plan is available at [www.MercedSGMA.org](http://www.MercedSGMA.org).