

From: [Michael McKinney](#)
To: lauren.winn@sen.ca.gov; heather.caden@sen.ca.gov
Cc: [Jeff Simonetti](#)
Subject: Request for Review: Groundwater Adjudication -- Legislative Proposal
Date: Wednesday, January 22, 2025 2:20:55 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[image002.png](#)
[image003.png](#)
[image004.png](#)
[Groundwater-Adjudications-2025-2026-Legislative-Proposal \(v8-1\).pdf](#)

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Lauren and Heather:

By way of introduction, I am a lobbyist for Indian Wells Valley Groundwater Authority, a groundwater sustainability agency in Kern County.

A supporting coalition member, the California Alliance for Family Farmers, suggested that we contact the Senator to discuss the attached 2025 Legislative Proposal on Groundwater Adjudication and protection of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA).

Speaker Rivas has submitted the proposal to Legislative Counsel (unbacked). We are requesting your office's review as a potential Author.

The proposal is relatively simple. It amends the Water Code to establish a validation action as the sole (court) venue for reviewing a groundwater sustainability plan. This closes a loophole between the Streamlined Adjudication Act(s) and the SGMA, which allows for a de novo review by the courts in an adjudication without deference to the technical findings of the groundwater sustainability agency and the review/approval by the Department of Water Resources. Four critically overdrafted groundwater basins with approved Groundwater Sustainability Plans are facing this situation, and a fifth GSA (representing six basins in Salinas Valley) will likely be next.

CAFF, San Luis Obispo County, Fox Canyon Groundwater Management Agency, and the City of Ridgecrest support the IWVGA-sponsored proposal. The Counties of Ventura, Santa Barbara, Kern, Inyo, and San Bernardino are reviewing it to support.

Agricultural interests and Cal-Chamber will oppose it. The Judicial Council also opposes it, and we are addressing their opposition points now.

DWR, the State Water Resources Control Board, and the Department of Justice recognize the issue, have worked with IWVGA on language, and recognize the proposal as a solution to the problem (everything short of endorsement).

May I schedule a time on your calendar to discuss the proposal thoroughly and answer any questions you may have?

Please let me know if your schedule permits a call. If you have any immediate questions or concerns, please call me at 714.299.0053.

v/r,

Michael W. McKinney (for)
Indian Wells Valley Groundwater Authority



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