

ASSEMBLY BILL

No. 938

Introduced by Assembly Member Salas

February 26, 2015

An act to amend Section 10722.4 of the Water Code, relating to groundwater.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 938, as introduced, Salas. Groundwater: basin reprioritization: establishment of groundwater sustainability agency.

Existing law requires the Department of Water Resources to identify the extent of monitoring of groundwater elevations that is being undertaken within each groundwater basin or subbasin and to prioritize basins or subbasins as high, medium, low, or very low priority and requires the initial priority for each basin to be established no later than January 31, 2015. Existing law, the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act, requires all groundwater basins designated as high- or medium-priority basins by the department that are designated as basins subject to critical conditions of overdraft to be managed under a groundwater sustainability plan or coordinated groundwater sustainability plans by January 31, 2020, and requires all other groundwater basins designated as high- or medium-priority basins to be managed under a groundwater sustainability plan or coordinated groundwater sustainability plans by January 31, 2022, except as specified. The act requires a local agency, any time the department changes these basin priorities and elevates a basin to a medium- or high-priority basin after January 31, 2015, to either establish a groundwater sustainability agency within 2 years of reprioritization and adopt a groundwater sustainability plan within 5 years of reprioritization,

or to submit an alternative to the department that the local agency believes satisfies the objectives of these provisions within 2 years of reprioritization.

This bill would impose the requirement to establish a groundwater sustainability agency or submit an alternative after reprioritization on a local agency or combination of local agencies overlying a groundwater basin.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: no. State-mandated local program: no.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 10722.4 of the Water Code is amended
2 to read:

3 10722.4. (a) Pursuant to Section 10933, for the purposes of
4 this part the department shall categorize each basin as one of the
5 following priorities:

- 6 (1) High priority.
- 7 (2) Medium priority.
- 8 (3) Low priority.
- 9 (4) Very low priority.

10 (b) The initial priority for each basin shall be established by the
11 department pursuant to Section 10933 no later than January 31,
12 2015.

13 (c) Any time the department updates Bulletin 118 boundaries
14 pursuant to subdivision (b) of Section 12924, the department shall
15 reassess the prioritization pursuant to Section 10933.

16 (d) Any time the department changes the basin priorities
17 pursuant to Section 10933, if a basin is elevated to a medium- or
18 high-priority basin after January 31, 2015, a local agency *or*
19 *combination of local agencies overlying a groundwater basin* shall
20 have two years from the date of reprioritization to either establish
21 a groundwater sustainability agency pursuant to Chapter 4
22 (commencing with Section 10723) and five years from the date of
23 reprioritization to adopt a groundwater sustainability plan pursuant
24 to Chapter 6 (commencing with Section 10727) or two years to
25 satisfy the requirements of Section 10733.6.

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