



Frequently Asked Questions

Since 2017, the South San Joaquin Irrigation District has partnered with the Cities of Escalon and Ripon to form the South San Joaquin Groundwater Sustainability Agency (SSJGSA).

The SSJGSA is one of 16-Member GSAs represented in the Eastern San Joaquin Groundwater Authority (ESJGWA). The ESJGWA was formed to collectively comply with the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA). The ESJGWA has developed a Draft Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) 2025 Amendment for the Eastern San Joaquin Subbasin which includes all of San Joaquin County East of the San Joaquin River and part of Calaveras and Stanislaus Counties to the east.

Where can I find the Public Review Draft GSP 2025 Amendment?

www.esjgroundwater.org/Documents/GSP or scan the code. If you have questions, please contact Brandon Nakagawa, SSJID Water Resources Coordinator, at (209) 305-8442, or via email at brandon.nakagawa@ssjid.gov.



Will the GSP 2025 Amendment require pumping reductions?

Not at this time. The GSP 2025 Amendment remains focused on GSAs within the Eastern San Joaquin Subbasin implementing projects that utilize more surface water in-lieu of groundwater pumping and direct groundwater recharge through basins and other infrastructure. If GSAs cannot meet their recharge targets, then GSAs will need to develop a plan to reduce groundwater pumping. The amount of groundwater pumping reduction will vary from GSA to GSA and may also vary if growers have access to surface water. The 2025 GSP Amendment includes a commitment for GSAs to start pumping reductions in 2030 and ramping up to reductions that lead to sustainability by 2040 as required by SGMA.

Does SSJID expect to reduce groundwater pumping for its growers beginning in 2030?

SSJID does not anticipate needing to implement a groundwater pumping reduction program beginning in 2030. SSJID continues to provide Stanislaus River water to over 50,000 acres of irrigated agriculture which has kept groundwater pumping demands relatively low. SSJID's facilities such as Woodward Reservoir and the Main Distribution Canal directly recharge the underlying groundwater basin by over 40,000 acre-feet per year.

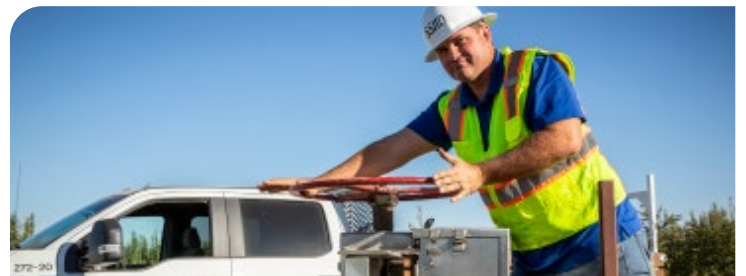
Increased frequency of droughts due to climate change or increasingly stringent water regulations imposed by the State or Federal Governments could reduce the water available to SSJID in the future. SSJID would need to re-analyze these changing circumstances as it pertains to how a significant loss of surface water supplies could affect future groundwater use. Defending its senior water rights remains the District's number one strategic priority.

How long will the Public Review Draft be posted?

The Public Review Draft GSP 2025 Amendment will be available for public comment through October 31, 2024.

When will the South San Joaquin GSA adopt the Plan?

The Final Draft GSP 2025 Amendment is expected to be available on December 11, 2024. The South San Joaquin GSA would adopt the GSP Amendment at its regularly scheduled meeting on December 18, 2024 or January 15, 2025.





Frequently Asked Questions *(Continued)*

How can I provide input into the Draft GSP Amendment?

Option A: The South San Joaquin GSA must hold a public hearing prior to adopting the GSP Amendment. The South San Joaquin GSA Board Chair would open the public hearing at its regularly scheduled meeting on December 18, 2024 or January 15, 2025, and members of the public would be allowed to speak on the GSP Amendment. After all members of the public have been heard, the Chair will close the public hearing and the South San Joaquin GSA Board may then entertain a motion to adopt the GSP Amendment.

Option B: Members of the public can go to the ESJGWA website and read the Draft GSP Amendments. Members of the Public have until October 31, 2024 to send comments via email to info@esjgroundwater.org.

Option C: To log a concern, comment, or for questions regarding the Draft GSP Amendments, SSJID customers or residents of the Cities of Escalon and Ripon should contact Brandon Nakagawa, SSJID Water Resources Coordinator, at **(209) 305-8442**, or via email at brandon.nakagawa@ssjid.gov.

How does the South San Joaquin GSA pay its operating costs?

The South San Joaquin GSA jointly shares in the cost of its operations between SSJID and the Cities of Escalon and Ripon. SSJID utilizes revenues from its irrigation rates including those who have signed off from SSJID service to pay for its share of South San Joaquin GSA Costs. Costs to operate the South San Joaquin GSA continue to go up as costs to comply with SGMA continue to grow. In the near future, SSJID must consider ways to equitably and legally generate additional revenue for SGMA compliance.

What if the GSP Amendments are not adopted by all 16-GSAs?

The California Department of Water Resources would then have the authority to refer the entire Eastern San Joaquin Subbasin to the State Water Resources Control Board for probationary status. Under SGMA, the State Water Board has broad authority to mandate excessive fees and groundwater pumping reporting requirements.

What if the California Department of Water Resources finds our GSP Amendments to be inadequate?

DWR approved the Eastern San Joaquin Subbasin’s GSP in 2023 after the ESJGWA submitted extensive revisions as requested by DWR. The approval letter received from DWR also contained specific directions to provide additional information in the 2025 GSP Amendment.

Once adopted and submitted by the January 31, 2025 deadline, DWR has 2-years to evaluate the GSP Amendments and render a determination. DWR could issue a request for more revisions or could determine the GSP Amendments to be inadequate triggering referral to the State Water Board for probationary status as described above.

Do we want the State to declare “probationary status” for the Eastern San Joaquin Subbasin?

Absolutely not. The SSJID Board of Directors maintains that groundwater management is best left in the hands of local GSAs. The experiences of the Tulare Lake and Tule Subbasins who have recently gone through the State Water Board’s Probationary Hearing process should be an ominous and eye opening indication for all groundwater users throughout the State.

New Articles – Probationary Status



Tulare Lake Sub-basin
hanfordsentinel.com
<https://qrco.de/bfSLE9>



State water board agrees on probation for Tule Subbasin
ivpressonline.com
<https://qrco.de/bfSLHR>



State appeals Kings County judge’s groundwater injunction
sjwwater.org
<https://qrco.de/bfSLJW>