

Groundwater Conveyance Policy

Board Adopted – April 14, 2020

Revised January 12, 2021

District's Objectives

The District's Central Valley Project contract supply is chronically deficient and supplemental surface water supplies can be prohibitively costly and unreliable. This Groundwater Conveyance Policy (Policy) seeks to address these challenges by balancing the benefits of producing groundwater and utilizing District facilities to convey that groundwater, with the need to ensure water quality is protected, and that the costs associated with the implementation of this Policy are appropriately allocated and recovered.

Scope

This Policy applies to all landowners or water users wishing to use the District's facilities to convey groundwater. All wells affected by this Policy are subject to the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act. Landowners or water users (Requester) wishing to use the District's facilities must request to do so beforehand and agree to abide by this Policy and applicable law. Prior to use of the District's facilities, a Requester and the District will meet to inspect the Requester's well and appurtenances, review the District's policy, and to schedule a water quality test and meter calibration. The District may require modification of a Requester's facilities to address metering, safety and/or maintenance concerns prior to testing for water quality.

If a Requester qualifies to use the District's facilities to convey groundwater, the Requester will be required to sign a Groundwater Conveyance License Agreement authorizing the terms and conditions for the District's control and regulation of the use of its and the Requester's facilities.

Policy

It is the Policy of the District to allow use of District facilities to convey groundwater developed by the District and Requesters for use within the District, provided:

- 1) WATER QUALITY: The District will sample water quality once at each well-head to determine pump-in eligibility and priority, and will further test, generally daily for salinity and as appropriate for boron, at multiple sites throughout the District's to monitor blended water quality on an ongoing basis. The District assumes no responsibility for the bacterial quality of water delivered or any other constituent. This water is not intended for human consumption. The District will strive to operate in a manner that enhances the opportunity to produce groundwater by balancing water users demands, water quality, and well production by blending with surface water supplies, if available.

All Requesters must be able to meet the following water quality standards:

a) Well Head:

i. Salinity: $\leq 1,500$ total dissolved solids (tds).

b) When the District's Central Valley Project contract allocation is $>25\%$, blended water quality in the District's facilities shall not exceed:

- i. Salinity: ≤ 800 tds at the first turnout downstream of a well discharge location;
 - ii. Boron: ≤ 5 ppm at the first turnout downstream of a well discharge location.
- c) When the District's Central Valley Project contract allocation is $\leq 25\%$, blended water quality in the District's facilities shall not exceed:
 - i. Salinity: $\leq 1,000$ tds at the first turnout downstream of a well discharge location;
 - ii. Boron: ≤ 1.0 ppm at the first turnout downstream of a well discharge location.
- d) When the District's Central Valley Project contract allocation is $\leq 10\%$, blended water quality in the District's facilities shall not exceed:
 - i. Salinity: $\leq 1,200$ tds at the first turnout downstream of a well discharge location;
 - ii. Boron: ≤ 1.2 ppm at the first turnout downstream of a well discharge location.

If these water quality standards are not met, then the District may require a Requester to terminate use of the District's facilities based upon the water quality priority established below in Section 3(b).

Upon request, the District will work with individual growers to attempt to address particularly sensitive crops and/or stages of development, for example germination.

2) GROUNDWATER SUPPLY:

- a) District's Wells: The District may elect to develop groundwater from its wells to supplement water supply to meet in-District demands. Groundwater developed by the District will be allocated to all District water users on a pro-rata acreage basis.
- b) Requester's well(s): Those that qualify may use the District's conveyance facilities to convey groundwater to meet their crop demands in the then current water contract year (March through February). A Requester may develop groundwater at a rate greater than its instantaneous demand, providing pre-approval by the District, but may not develop more groundwater than a Requester can use in any given water contract year. Those using the District's conveyance facilities will be subject to a 10% loss factor. Groundwater cannot be pumped for transfer out of the District, groundwater substitution, or to reschedule. Requesters may develop groundwater for sale to the District and/or other District water users to help meet in-District crop demands in the then current water contract year. Groundwater purchased by the District will be at terms and a price approved by the Board of Directors.

3) PRIORITY: Groundwater can only be pumped when authorized by the District. The District will consider if it has sufficient demand and capacity to assimilate the groundwater and meet blended well water quality standards, location specific conveyance capacity and/or water quality constraints, and any other factors that may adversely impact District operations. The District will prioritize usage of its surface water supplies.

- a) Beneficiary:
 - i. Groundwater developed by the District for all water users, allocated on a pro-rata acreage basis;

- ii. Groundwater developed by a Requester from well(s) within the District for sale to the District for delivery to all water users, allocated on a pro-rata acreage basis;
 - iii. Groundwater developed by a Requester from well(s) within the District for delivery to the Requester's land within the District;
 - iv. Groundwater developed by a Requester from well(s) within the District for delivery to another District water user;
 - v. Requester's well(s) outside the District for delivery to the Requester's land within the District.
- b) **Quality:** If blended water quality standards are exceeded, the District shall require wells of the poorest water quality to terminate discharge into the District facilities, and the District will progress in order from worst to best until blended water quality standards are met. If water quality is the same among operating wells, then the priorities established under Section 3(a) will apply. The District retains the right to make a final determination as to what wells may operate.
- 4) **LICENSE:** If a Requester qualifies to use the District's facilities to convey groundwater, the Requester will be required to sign a Groundwater Conveyance License Agreement authorizing the manner, method, limitations, terms, and provisions for the District's control and regulation of the use of its and the Requester's facilities. The License Agreement will, among other things, grant permission to District personnel to access and operate the Requester's well, and indemnify the District.
- 5) **COSTS:**
- a) **District Wells:** All costs associated with the operation, maintenance, and capital replacement of the District's wells will be paid by the District and recovered from all water users at a per acre-foot rate. District developed groundwater will be allocated and billed on a monthly basis.
 - b) **District Operations & Maintenance (O&M):** All metered water deliveries through a water user's turnout, regardless of water source, will pay the District's annual O&M fee; except for groundwater utilizing a nominal portion of the District's facilities with no District pumping for which the District will only apply an administration fee;
 - c) **Requester's Operations & Maintenance:** All costs associated with the operation, maintenance, and/or replacement of the Requester's well will be paid by the Requester.
 - d) **Monitoring:** Well-head water quality testing and meter calibration costs will be paid by the Requester. Daily water quality monitoring will be paid by the Requester if delivery of the groundwater is to the Requester or another water user within the District. All other Daily water quality monitoring costs will be paid by the District and recovered as part of the District's annual O&M rate.

Review

The District's Board of Directors will review and consider this Policy at least annually, and more frequently if circumstances warrant. District staff will provide the Board a report on groundwater development and water quality on a monthly basis.