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AB-709 Sustainable Groundwater Management Act: groundwater sustainability plans. (2025-2026)

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Date Published: 10/08/2025 10:00 AM

Assembly Bill No. 709

CHAPTER 439

An act to amend Section 10733.4 of the Water Code, relating to water.

[Approved by Governor October 07, 2025. Filed with Secretary of State October 07, 2025.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 709, Jeff Gonzalez. Sustainable Groundwater Management Act: groundwater sustainability plans.

Existing law, the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act, requires all groundwater basins designated as high- or medium-priority basins by the Department of Water Resources to be managed under a groundwater sustainability plan or coordinated groundwater sustainability plans, except as specified.

The act requires a groundwater sustainability agency, upon adoption of a groundwater sustainability plan, to submit the groundwater sustainability plan to the department for review. If groundwater sustainability agencies develop multiple groundwater sustainability plans for a basin, the act requires, when the entire basin is covered by groundwater sustainability plans, the groundwater sustainability agencies to jointly submit to the department the groundwater sustainability plans, an explanation of how the plans satisfy specified provisions of the act, and a copy of the coordination agreement between the groundwater sustainability agencies. The act requires the department to evaluate a groundwater sustainability plan within 2 years of its submission and issue an assessment of the plan.

This bill would provide that nothing in those provisions relating to making submissions to the department shall be construed to prohibit groundwater sustainability agencies that have developed multiple groundwater sustainability plans for a basin from amending the coordination agreement following department issuance of an assessment of the plans.

Vote: majority Appropriation: no Fiscal Committee: no Local Program: no

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. Section 10733.4 of the Water Code is amended to read:

10733.4. (a) Upon adoption of a groundwater sustainability plan, a groundwater sustainability agency shall submit the groundwater sustainability plan to the department for review pursuant to this chapter.

(b) If groundwater sustainability agencies develop multiple groundwater sustainability plans for a basin, the submission required by subdivision (a) shall not occur until the entire basin is covered by groundwater sustainability plans. When the entire basin is covered by groundwater sustainability plans, the groundwater sustainability agencies shall jointly submit to the department all of the following:

(1) The groundwater sustainability plans.

(2) An explanation of how the groundwater sustainability plans implemented together satisfy Sections 10727.2, 10727.4, and 10727.6 for the entire basin.

(3) A copy of the coordination agreement between the groundwater sustainability agencies to ensure the coordinated implementation of the groundwater sustainability plans for the entire basin.

(c) Upon receipt of a groundwater sustainability plan, the department shall post the plan on the department's internet website and provide 60 days for persons to submit comments to the department about the plan.

(d) The department shall evaluate the groundwater sustainability plan within two years of its submission by a groundwater sustainability agency and issue an assessment of the plan. The assessment may include recommended corrective actions to address any deficiencies identified by the department.

(e) Nothing in this section shall be construed to prohibit a groundwater sustainability agency from implementing a groundwater sustainability plan prior to evaluation and assessment of the groundwater sustainability plan by the department.

(f) Nothing in this section shall be construed to prohibit groundwater sustainability agencies that have developed multiple groundwater sustainability plans for a basin from amending the coordination agreement following department issuance of an assessment of the plans.