

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY JUNE 21, 2016

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY MAY 31, 2016

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY MARCH 7, 2016

AMENDED IN SENATE FEBRUARY 12, 2015

SENATE BILL

No. 37

Introduced by Senator Vidak
(Principal coauthor: Senator Fuller)
(Principal coauthors: Assembly Members Mathis and Salas)

December 1, 2014

An act to amend Section 10723 of the Water Code, and to create the Kings River East Groundwater Sustainability Agency, and prescribing its boundaries, organization, operation, management, financing, and other powers and duties, relating to water districts.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 37, as amended, Vidak. Kings River East Groundwater Sustainability Agency Act.

Existing law, the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act, requires all groundwater basins designated as high- or medium-priority basins by the Department of Water Resources 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 authorizes any local agency or combination of local agencies overlying a groundwater basin to decide to become a

groundwater sustainability agency for that basin. The act deems certain agencies created by statute to manage groundwater the exclusive local agencies within their respective statutory boundaries with powers to comply with the act and authorizes these agencies to opt out of being the exclusive groundwater management agency.

This bill would create the Kings River East Groundwater Sustainability Agency and would require the agency's initial boundaries to be established by the boards of supervisors of the Counties of Fresno and Tulare after a noticed public hearing. The bill would require the agency to elect to be a groundwater sustainability agency under the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act for that portion of the Kings Subbasin that lies within the boundaries of the agency and would require the agency to develop and implement a groundwater sustainability plan to achieve sustainable groundwater management within the territory of the agency. The bill would generally specify the powers and purposes of the agency. The bill would prescribe the composition of the 7-member board of directors of the agency and would require members and alternates to be chosen by certain member agencies, as specified. By imposing duties on the agency and the member agencies, the bill would impose a state-mandated local program. The bill would deem the Kings River East Groundwater Sustainability Agency the exclusive local agency with powers to comply with the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act.

The California Constitution requires the state to reimburse local agencies and school districts for certain costs mandated by the state. Statutory provisions establish procedures for making that reimbursement.

This bill would provide that no reimbursement is required by this act for a specified reason.

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

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

- 1 SECTION 1. This act shall be known and may be cited as the
- 2 Kings River East Groundwater Sustainability Agency Act.

1 Kings River East Groundwater Sustainability Agency Act

2
3 Article 1. Findings and Declarations

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5 101. The Legislature hereby finds and declares that the
6 preservation of the groundwater resources within the territory of
7 the agency for agricultural, municipal, and industrial uses is in the
8 public interest and that the creation of the agency pursuant to this
9 act is for the common benefit of water users.

10 102. The Legislature further finds and declares that the
11 groundwater management activities of the agency benefit all
12 operators of groundwater extraction facilities within the territory
13 of the agency.

14 103. The Legislature further finds and declares that
15 circumstances in the territory of the agency to be formed hereby,
16 which may not exist in other locations, justify the formation of the
17 agency and the grant of powers contained in this act.

18
19 Article 2. Creation and Purposes

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21 201. (a) A groundwater management agency is hereby created
22 in the Counties of Fresno and Tulare to be known as the Kings
23 River East Groundwater Sustainability Agency.

24 (b) The agency shall be governed by a board as specified in
25 Section 501 and shall have the boundaries specified in Section
26 301. The agency shall *only* exercise the powers granted by this act
27 and the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (Part 2.74
28 (commencing with Section 10720) of Division 6 of the Water
29 Code) for purposes of groundwater management within the
30 boundaries of the agency, together with any other powers as are
31 reasonably implied, necessary, and proper to carry out the
32 objectives and purposes of the agency to implement the Sustainable
33 Groundwater Management Act. *The agency shall abide by the*
34 *rules and regulations promulgated by the Department of Water*
35 *Resources and the State Water Resources Control Board to*
36 *implement the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act.*

Article 3. Boundaries

301. For purposes of this act, the initial boundaries of the agency shall include the following:

(a) All land located within the exterior perimeter boundaries of Alta Irrigation District that is within the Counties of Fresno and Tulare.

(b) All land located in the incorporated City of Reedley.

(c) All land located in Kings River Water District plus parcel 350-150-16 within the County of Fresno, as that parcel existed as of January 1, 2016, and excluding the incorporated City of Sanger.

(d) Land that is east of Alta Irrigation District and east of the east line of Sections 13 and 24, T13S, R23E, between Alta Irrigation District and east line and the east line of the Bulletin 118 Kings Subbasin boundary, as described in the report by the Department of Water Resources titled, “California’s Groundwater: Bulletin 118,” updated in 2003, as it may be subsequently updated or revised in accordance with Section 12924 of the Water Code.

302. The agency’s initial boundaries shall be established by the boards of supervisors of the Counties of Fresno and Tulare after a noticed public hearing. The boundaries shall be depicted on a map that shall be adopted by the boards of supervisors of those counties and thereafter recorded in the office of the county recorder of each county.

303. The boards of supervisors of the Counties of Fresno and Tulare may adjust the boundaries of the agency in the same manner prescribed for establishment of the initial boundaries if the boundaries of the basin are revised, including the establishment of new subbasins.

Article 4. Definitions

401. Unless otherwise indicated by their context, the definitions set forth in this article govern the interpretation of this act.

401.1. “Actively and primarily engaged in production of agriculture” means that a person derives at least 75 percent of his or her annual income from production agriculture.

402. “Agency” means the Kings River East Groundwater Sustainability Agency established by this act.

403. “Alta” means the Alta Irrigation District.

1 404. "Aquifer" means a geologic formation or structure that
2 transmits water in sufficient quantities to supply pumping wells
3 or springs.

4 405. "Basin" has the same meaning as defined in Section 10721
5 of the Water Code.

6 406. "Board" means the board of directors of the agency, as
7 more particularly described in Section 501.

8 407. "Cities" means the Cities of Dinuba, Orange Cove, and
9 Reedley.

10 408. "Coordination agreement" has the same meaning as
11 defined in Section 10721 of the Water Code.

12 409. "County" means either the County of Fresno or the County
13 of Tulare, as the context requires. "Counties" means the County
14 of Fresno and the County of Tulare.

15 410. "Extraction" means the act of obtaining groundwater by
16 pumping or other controlled means.

17 411. "Groundwater" has the same meaning as defined in
18 Section 10721 of the Water Code.

19 412. "Groundwater management activities" means programs,
20 measures, or actions taken to preserve, protect, and enhance
21 groundwater resources within the territory of the agency.

22 413. "Kings Subbasin" means the San Joaquin Valley
23 Groundwater Basin Kings Subbasin.

24 414. "Member agency" means Alta, the counties, the cities,
25 and the special districts entitled to representation on the agency's
26 board of directors as specified in Section 501.

27 415. "Operator" has the same meaning as defined in Section
28 10721 of the Water Code.

29 416. "Person" includes any state or local governmental agency,
30 private corporation, firm, partnership, limited liability company,
31 individual, group of individuals, or, to the extent authorized by
32 law, any federal agency.

33 417. "Plan" means a groundwater sustainability plan prepared
34 by the agency pursuant to this act.

35 418. "Supplemental water" means surface water or groundwater
36 imported from outside the watershed or watersheds of the basin
37 or aquifer and floodwaters that are conserved and saved within the
38 watershed or watersheds that would otherwise have been lost or
39 would not have reached the basin or aquifer.

Article 5. General Provisions

501. (a) The agency shall be governed by a board of directors that shall consist of seven members, as follows:

(1) One member shall be chosen by Alta.

(2) One member shall be chosen by the County of Fresno.

(3) One member shall be chosen by the County of Tulare.

(4) One member shall be chosen by the cities. This member shall be chosen from the members of the city councils of the cities whose territory, at least in part, overlies the territory of the agency. This member shall be chosen at a public meeting where each city is represented by its mayor.

(5) One member shall be chosen from the members of the governing boards of the following special districts that are not governed by the board of supervisors of either county, are engaged in water activities, and whose territory, at least in part, overlies the territory of the agency:

(A) Hills Valley Irrigation District.

(B) Orange Cove Irrigation District.

(C) Tri-Valley Water District.

(D) Kings River Water District.

(6) One member shall be chosen from the members of the governing boards of special districts that provide drinking water within the territory of the agency.

(7) One member shall be chosen by the other six board members to represent agricultural interests within the territory of the agency. This member shall reside and be actively and primarily engaged in production of agriculture within the territory of the agency. This member shall be selected from a list of at least five nominations submitted from the Fresno County Farm Bureau and the Tulare County Farm Bureau, acting jointly, but the five nominees need not be members of either organization.

(b) The board members described in paragraphs (1), (2), and (3) of subdivision (a) shall be chosen by their respective governing boards from their board members whose districts or divisions overlie, at least in part, the territory of the agency.

(c) The board members described in paragraphs (5) and (6) of subdivision (a) shall be chosen at a public meeting where each special district is represented by the president or chair of its governing board.

1 (d) There shall be an alternate for each board member, chosen
2 in the same manner and by the same entity as the board member.
3 The alternate member shall act in place of the board member he
4 or she is an alternate for in case of that board member's absence
5 or inability to act.

6 502. (a) The members described in paragraphs (1) to (6),
7 inclusive, of subdivision (a) of Section 501 shall serve for a
8 four-year term of office, or until the member is no longer an
9 eligible official of the member agency. These members may serve
10 for more than one term of office.

11 (b) The member described in paragraph (7) of subdivision (a)
12 of Section 501 shall serve a four-year term of office.

13 503. (a) The board may adopt an ordinance to provide
14 compensation to members of the board in an amount not to exceed
15 one hundred dollars (\$100) per day for each day's attendance at
16 meetings of the board or for each day's service rendered as a
17 member of the board by request of the board. For purposes of this
18 section, the determination of whether a board member's activities
19 on any specific day are compensable shall be made pursuant to
20 Article 2.3 (commencing with Section 53232) of Chapter 2 of Part
21 1 of Division 2 of Title 5 of the Government Code.

22 (b) Reimbursement for expenses of members of the board is
23 subject to Sections 53232.2 and 53232.3 of the Government Code.

24 (c) The board may adopt an ordinance to increase the
25 compensation received by members of the board above the amount
26 of one hundred dollars (\$100) per day. The increase shall not
27 exceed an amount equal to 5 percent, for each calendar year
28 following the operative date of the last adjustment, of the
29 compensation that is received when the ordinance is adopted.

30 (d) A board member shall not be compensated for more than a
31 total of 10 days in any calendar month.

32 504. (a) The board may adopt ordinances for the purpose of
33 regulating, conserving, managing, and controlling the use and
34 extraction of groundwater within the territory of the agency.

35 (b) An ordinance adopted by the board shall become effective
36 30 days from the date of its passage.

37 (c) All ordinances shall be adopted at noticed, public hearings
38 by a majority vote of the board. No ordinance shall be adopted by
39 the board except at a public hearing. Notice of the hearing shall

1 be published in a newspaper of general circulation pursuant to
2 Section 6066 of the Government Code.

3 (d) The board shall provide notice of the adoption of all
4 ordinances.

5 505. No provision of this act shall be construed as denying to
6 the counties, any city, Alta, or any other member agency any rights
7 or powers that they already have or that they may be granted.

8 506. The agency may contract with either county or Alta for
9 staff and other services. The agency may hire contractors and
10 consultants as it considers appropriate.

11 507. The agency shall enter into a coordination agreement with
12 other local agencies for purposes of coordinating the agency's plan
13 with other agencies or groundwater sustainability plans within the
14 Kings Subbasin as required by the Sustainable Groundwater
15 Management Act (Part 2.74 (commencing with Section 10720) of
16 Division 6 of the Water Code).

17 508. The agency may exclude from any of the requirements of
18 this act, or the operation of any ordinance, any operator who
19 annually extracts less than a minimum amount of groundwater as
20 specified by an ordinance adopted by the board.

21 22 Article 6. Studies and Investigations 23

24 601. The agency may collect data and conduct technical and
25 other investigations of all kinds in order to carry out the provisions
26 of this act. All hydrological investigations and studies carried out
27 by or on behalf of the agency shall be constructed by or under the
28 supervision of licensed engineers or other persons qualified in
29 groundwater geology or hydrology.

30 602. The agency may recommend and encourage water
31 recycling and other water development projects, where those
32 projects will enhance and contribute to the responsible management
33 of groundwater resources, as part of its annual plan for
34 implementation of groundwater management objectives.

35 36 Article 7. Sustainable Groundwater Management Powers 37

38 701. The agency shall develop and implement a groundwater
39 sustainability plan pursuant to Chapter 6 (commencing with Section
40 10727) of Part 2.74 of Division 6 of the Water Code to achieve

1 sustainable groundwater management within the territory of the
2 agency.

3 702. The agency shall elect to be a groundwater sustainability
4 agency pursuant to Chapter 4 (commencing with Section 10723)
5 of Part 2.74 of Division 6 of the Water Code for that portion of
6 the Kings Subbasin that lies within the boundaries of the agency.

7 703. The agency may exercise any of the powers described in
8 Chapter 5 (commencing with Section 10725) of Part 2.74 of
9 Division 6 of the Water Code and the enforcement powers
10 described in Chapter 9 (commencing with Section 10732) of Part
11 2.74 of Division 6 of the Water Code.

12 704. The availability of supplemental water to any operator
13 shall not subject that operator to regulations that are more
14 restrictive than those imposed on other operators.

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16 Article 8. Fee Authority
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18 801. Pursuant to Chapter 8 (commencing with Section 10730)
19 of Part 2.74 of Division 6 of the Water Code, the agency may
20 impose fees, including, but not limited to, permit fees and fees on
21 groundwater extraction or other regulated activity, to fund the costs
22 of a groundwater sustainability program, that include, but are not
23 limited to, the preparation, adoption, and amendment of a
24 groundwater sustainability plan, investigations, inspections,
25 compliance assistance, enforcement, and program administration,
26 including a prudent reserve.

27 SEC. 2. Section 10723 of the Water Code is amended to read:

28 10723. (a) Except as provided in subdivision (c), any local
29 agency or combination of local agencies overlying a groundwater
30 basin may decide to become a groundwater sustainability agency
31 for that basin.

32 (b) Before deciding to become a groundwater sustainability
33 agency, and after publication of notice pursuant to Section 6066
34 of the Government Code, the local agency or agencies shall hold
35 a public hearing in the county or counties overlying the basin.

36 (c) (1) Except as provided in paragraph (2), the following
37 agencies created by statute to manage groundwater shall be deemed
38 the exclusive local agencies within their respective statutory
39 boundaries with powers to comply with this part:

- 1 (A) Alameda County Flood Control and Water Conservation
2 District, Zone 7.
- 3 (B) Alameda County Water District.
- 4 (C) Desert Water Agency.
- 5 (D) Fox Canyon Groundwater Management Agency.
- 6 (E) Honey Lake Valley Groundwater Management District.
- 7 (F) Kings River East Groundwater Sustainability Agency.
- 8 (G) Long Valley Groundwater Management District.
- 9 (H) Mendocino City Community Services District.
- 10 (I) Mono County Tri-Valley Groundwater Management District.
- 11 (J) Monterey Peninsula Water Management District.
- 12 (K) Ojai Groundwater Management Agency.
- 13 (L) Orange County Water District.
- 14 (M) Pajaro Valley Water Management Agency.
- 15 (N) Santa Clara Valley Water District.
- 16 (O) Sierra Valley Groundwater Management District.
- 17 (P) Willow Creek Groundwater Management Agency.
- 18 (2) An agency identified in this subdivision may opt out of being
19 the exclusive groundwater management agency within its statutory
20 boundaries by sending a notice to the department, which shall be
21 posted on the department's Internet Web site within 15 days of
22 receipt. If an agency identified in paragraph (1) opts out of being
23 the exclusive groundwater management agency, any other local
24 agency or combination of local agencies operating within the
25 statutory boundaries of the agency that has opted out may notify
26 the department pursuant to Section 10723.8 of its decision to be
27 the groundwater sustainability agency.
- 28 (3) A local agency listed in paragraph (1) may comply with this
29 part by meeting the requirements of Section 10733.6 or opting to
30 become a groundwater sustainability agency pursuant to this
31 section. A local agency with authority to implement a basin-specific
32 management plan pursuant to its principal act shall not exercise
33 any authorities granted in this part in a manner inconsistent with
34 any prohibitions or limitations in its principal act unless the
35 governing board of the local agency makes a finding that the
36 agency is unable to sustainably manage the basin without the
37 prohibited authority.
- 38 (d) The decision of a local agency or combination of agencies
39 to become a groundwater sustainability agency shall take effect
40 as provided in Section 10723.8.

1 SEC. 3. No reimbursement is required by this act pursuant to
2 Section 6 of Article XIII B of the California Constitution because
3 a local agency or school district has the authority to levy service
4 charges, fees, or assessments sufficient to pay for the program or
5 level of service mandated by this act, within the meaning of Section
6 17556 of the Government Code.

O