



BASIN BOUNDARY MODIFICATION FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

The Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) established a process for local agencies to request that the Department of Water Resources (DWR) revise the boundaries of existing groundwater basins or subbasins, including the establishment of a new subbasin. The Basin Boundary Emergency Regulation was developed through an extensive stakeholder outreach process and was adopted on October 21, 2015. The provisions of the emergency regulation went into effect on November 16, 2015. Additional information about Basin Boundary Modifications and other elements of DWR's implementation of SGMA is available on DWR's Sustainable Groundwater Management website included here: <http://water.ca.gov/groundwater/sgm/index.cfm>.

General Questions

1. Is it mandatory to participate in Basin Boundary Modifications requests?

No, basin boundary modifications are voluntary. However, the emergency regulations create a process that provides a mechanism to modify basins or subbasins to improve coordination and promote statewide sustainable groundwater management.

2. How can I be notified when Basin Boundary Modifications related actions happen?

Subscribe to DWR's email listserv here: <http://www.water.ca.gov/groundwater/sgm/subscribe.cfm>

3. Does DWR provide maps that may assist with Basin Boundary Modifications?

Yes, DWR has developed a web-based application to inform local agencies and the Public about the existing Bulletin 118 groundwater basins and other relevant geologic and geographic data. [BBAT - Basin Boundary Assessment Tool](#)

4. What are the types of basin modifications?

There are two primary types of modifications; scientific and jurisdictional.

Scientific Modifications: A scientific modification to a basin or subbasin boundary involves the addition, deletion, or relocation of a boundary based on the geologic or hydrologic conditions that define a groundwater basin or subbasin.

- 1. External Boundary Modification:** A scientific modification involving the modification of external boundaries due to geologic or hydrologic conditions.
- 2. Internal Boundary Modification:** A basin or subbasin boundary may be modified, deleted, or added based on the presence or absence of a hydrogeologic barrier.

Jurisdictional Modifications: A jurisdictional modification involves the addition, deletion, or relocation of a basin or subbasin boundary that is not a scientific modification but promotes sustainable groundwater management.

- 1. Internal Boundary Revision** refers to any boundary modification that would adjust the location of a boundary between subbasins, within a basin, or the shared boundary between adjacent basins.

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2. **County Basin Consolidation** means the consolidation of all contiguous basins or subbasins within a county into a single basin or subbasin whose boundaries do not extend beyond those of the county.
3. **Basin Consolidation** refers to any boundary modification that would reduce the number of subbasins within a basin, or merge two or more adjacent basins, but would change only shared boundaries and would not change the external boundary of any basin or subbasin.
4. **Basin Subdivision** refers to any boundary modification that would increase the number of subbasins within a basin or subbasin.

Definitions

1. How is a local agency defined?

A public agency is defined as any agency that has water supply, water management, or land use responsibilities within a groundwater basin.

2. What is considered the definable bottom of a basin or subbasin?

Where the alluvial material in an aquifer or stacked series of aquifers contacts crystalline bedrock or at the base of freshwater.

3. What are the key components required to have in a qualified map?

A qualified map is a geologic map of a scale no smaller than 1:250,000 that is published by the U.S. Geological Survey or the California Geological Survey, or is a map published as part of a geologic investigation conducted by a state or federal agency, or is a geologic map prepared and signed by a professional geologist that is acceptable to the department.

4. How is a basin defined in Bulletin 118?

The term "basin" shall refer to an area specifically defined as a basin or "groundwater basin" in Bulletin 118, and shall refer generally to an aquifer or stacked series of aquifers with reasonably well-defined boundaries in a lateral direction, based on features that significantly impede groundwater flow, and a definable bottom, as further defined or characterized in Bulletin 118. In general the basins define areas where porous media flow is the dominant groundwater flow type, as opposed to fracture flow conditions.

Required Dates and Timeline

1. When will the next basin boundary modification period occur?

There will be subsequent basin boundary modification periods, which will remain open for a minimum 60 days, but the dates of these periods, have yet to be determined. It is anticipated that basin boundary modification submission periods will be based on demand and coordinated with 5-year updates to Bulletin 118.

2. What if DWR determines a submitted basin boundary modification request is incomplete after the closing period? Do submitting agencies have a grace period to fix the deficiency?

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Due to the limited time constraints with this initial submission period no extensions will be granted.

3. When is the first submission period for basin boundary modifications request?

January 1, 2016 through March 31, 2016.

Public or DWR Notification

1. How is proof of notification, concerning a completed request, to other local agencies and public water systems submitted to DWR?

The requesting agency should submit a copy of the notification and a list of names and addresses of local agencies and public water system that the notification was submitted. The notice should describe the procedural requirements to provide public input to a request, including the deadlines to submit public input, the form in which public input must be submitted, and the address to which public input must be submitted. All submissions will be made electronically through the [Basin Boundary Modification Request System](#).

2. How soon, following DWR updating submission status to 'Complete', should local agencies and interested parties be notified?

Within five working days after the requesting agency receives notice that a request is complete. The Department will also be sending email notifications on a bi-weekly basis of status changes within basins submitting modification requests.

3. What methods are acceptable when identifying and providing information about a proposed basin boundary modification request to affected agencies and affected systems within the basin or adjacent basins?

DWR does not require specific methods. However, during initial notification the requesting agency is encouraged to post relevant information to their Internet Website, include a brief a description and preliminary map of the proposed boundary modification, and when any public meetings will be held pertaining to the modification request.

4. Are published notices required for public meetings at which the proposed boundary modification will be discussed or considered? If so what should the notices include?

Published notices for public meetings are not required per the basin boundary regulations. However, requesting agencies shall include information demonstrating consultation with affected agencies and affected systems and published notices for public meetings held in compliance with other State law requiring notification of meetings.

5. When should I notify DWR once my agency decides to explore boundary modifications?

Within 15 days of decision to explore a basin boundary modification. Ideally the exploration of basin boundary modifications would occur prior to any agendaized meeting requiring notice of hearing by a governing board or body.

Initial Notification and Basin Boundary Modification Request Submittal Tool

1. Will DWR provide an instructional meeting to cover the basin boundary modification request submittal system?

Yes, DWR will conduct a Basin Boundary Modification Instructional Webinar on December 17, 2015. The webinar was recorded and is posted on the [Basin Boundary Website](#).

2. How accurate must the approximate delineation using the interactive map be during initial notification?

The lines should be drawn approximately but sufficient enough as to inform the general idea of what the modification includes.

3. How will I know if my Modification Request or Initial Notification was accepted by the Basin Boundary Modification Request System?

Email notifications are sent immediately to the point of contact (request manager) confirming, establishing a user account, submission of initial notification, and status changes to the modification request. These notifications are sent to the request manager and appropriate DWR staff.

4. Who can I contact for assistance with the Basin Boundary Modification Request System?

Please email the administrator at Timothy.Godwin@water.ca.gov for assistance.

Basin Boundary Modification Request Submittal

1. Who is eligible to submit a basin boundary modification request?

Only local agencies are eligible to submit a basin boundary modification request for the potential modification of a Bulletin 118 defined groundwater basin or subbasin.

2. What if a request meets multiple types of modification? Must I submit the information required for both in one request or submit two requests for the same area?

Combine all potential basin boundary modifications and submit as a singular request. DWR may consider and approve all or any of the proposals submitted. If multiple requests are being made for the same basin but discrete regions; the request manager can use the 'save as' function in the modification request system to stream line submissions of this nature.

3. What is the procedure if a request has already been submitted in the basin of interest? Must the requests be combined or may separate requests be submitted?

Separate requests may be submitted. However, DWR encourages requesting agencies, to the greatest extent practicable, combine all basin boundary modification requests that affect the same basin or subbasin and to coordinate with other affected agencies and affected systems to present the information as a single request. DWR will require consolidation of requests in the case of coincident or conflicting requests.

Required Supporting Information

1. Do DAC/DUC have to sign a resolution of support of a basin boundary modification request?

A DAC/DUC would be covered by the city or county in which they are located; so a letter of support would not be required directly from a DAC/DUC but rather the agency representing them.

2. Are letters of support for a basin boundary modification required by all affected agencies?

No, letters of support are not required by all affected agencies. However, if you are submitting a request for a basin subdivision it is required to submit evidence of three-fourths support from the local agencies and public water systems within the affected basin.

3. What information is required to be included in the resolution adopted by the requesting agency?

No specific requirements are defined in the regulations; however, the resolution should comply with local standards and requirements of the local agency forming the request.

4. If the request involves basin subdivision and the requesting agency does not receive three-fourths support is the basin boundary modification request automatically denied?

Yes, three-fourths support is a requirement to subdivide an existing basin by the local agencies or public water systems within the affected basin.

5. What coordinate system should GIS files use?

The Basin Boundary Modification Request System provides a downloadable copy of the basins identified in the request. The request requires use of these files as they have standardized the file parameters to streamline incorporation. The line work provided also serves to inform the requesting agency of the administrative adjustments made by the department.

6. Does a technical study need to be completed by a specific agency or may private studies be submitted?

A technical study must be a geologic or hydrologic report prepared and published by a state or federal agency, or a study published in a peer-reviewed scientific journal, or a report prepared and signed by a professional geologist or by a professional engineer. The study does not need to be conducted specifically for the request.

7. How many years of historical groundwater level data are required to show historical groundwater level trends?

The requesting agency should provide the data necessary to demonstrate that the principle aquifers in the basin have not experienced long-term declines in groundwater levels.

8. Is CEQA applicable to requesting agencies? If so, what are the requirements of the CEQA for requesting agencies?

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The requesting agency shall satisfy requirements of CEQA, including, if necessary, information to enable DWR to satisfy the requirements of a responsible agency. The requesting agency must determine if the modification request is defined as a project and subject to CEQA.

9. What kind of information will the requesting agency be required to provide as part of the basin boundary modification request?

The requesting agency will have to provide all supporting information required for the type of basin boundary modification that is being requested. This supporting information is outline in Article 5 of the basin boundary regulations. The Basin Boundary Modification Request System also provides guides to identify the required information based upon the type selected. A checklist is provided on the [Basin Boundary website](#) to also guide local agencies on the required information.

Evaluation Criteria and Cause for Denial

1. What would be the basis for denial of a basin boundary modification?

Basis for denial is outlined in "Article 6. Methodology and Criteria for Evaluation, Section 345.2" in the basin boundary regulations. However, each of these items will be considered as they affect the whole of the request. Substantial compliance with the regulation will be determined based upon the scope of each modification request.

2. What kind of criteria will be used in the evaluation of the basin boundary modification requests?

Criteria that will be used in the evaluation of a basin boundary modification request are listed in "Article 6. Methodology and Criteria for Evaluation, Section 345.4" in the basin boundary regulations.

Approved Basin Boundary Modification Requests

1. Can a basin boundary modification request be withdrawn?

A requesting agency may withdraw a boundary modification request at any time before the request is finalized by providing written notice to DWR.

2. May the department reverse an approved basin boundary modification at a later time?

Yes, if after revising the basin boundaries of a basin or subbasin, or establishing a new subbasin, DWR determines, based on substantial evidence, that assumptions regarding the sustainable management of the new basin or subbasin were incorrect, and that as a result the boundary modification should not have been adopted, DWR may, after consultation with the requesting agency, either restore the boundaries that existed before the boundary modification or revise the boundaries.

3. If a basin boundary modification is accepted by DWR, when will it be published and take effect?

A basin boundary modification once accepted by DWR will officially take effect when the Bulletin -118 - Interim Update is published.

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Public Input

1. Can public input for a basin boundary modification request still be submitted past the 90 day window?

Public input must be submitted to DWR within 30 days after DWR posts a notice that the request is complete. This period may extend past the March 31, 2016 90-day submittal period deadline.

2. Will the submitting agency be able to rebut any opposition to the proposed boundary modification?

Yes, any evidence the requesting agency believes will rebut any opposition to the proposed boundary modification or otherwise assist the Department in its evaluation should be included in the Request for Boundary Modification. The Basin Boundary Modification Request System will provide space for comments and rebuttals.

DWR Adjustments

1. Can DWR make adjustments to basin boundaries without being requested to do so?

DWR does have the authority in Water Code §12924 to investigate the state's basins and identify/modify basin boundaries. However, consistent with the intent of SGMA, local agencies can request modification to the basin definitions based upon local knowledge of the resource.

2. What did DWR's Administrative Adjustments to Bulletin 118 Basin Boundaries entail?

DWR realigned the digital (GIS) locations of High and Medium Priority groundwater basins and subbasins to more accurately correspond with the original written descriptions as documented in DWR Bulletin 118-2003 and updated in 2014. The alignment of basin boundaries referencing waterways and county lines were reviewed and compared to the referenced waterways as depicted by the National Hydrography Dataset and referenced county boundaries as depicted by CalFIRE. Where necessary, the relevant portions of the basin boundaries were adjusted to match these standard, statewide datasets. DWR also assessed basin boundaries with descriptions that reference geologic features and compared them to California Geologic Survey (CGS) maps. Based on these assessments DWR recommends the adjustment of a number of basin boundaries having a significant geologic issue and an unambiguous written description. These adjustments do not change the written description contained within Bulletin 118.