

FAQs

CASGEM GROUNDWATER BASIN PRIORITIZATION

Question: What is “CASGEM Groundwater Basin Prioritization”?

Answer: The California Water Code (§10933 and §12924) requires DWR to prioritize California’s groundwater basins and subbasins based on eight criteria, and to conduct groundwater basin assessments. As such, DWR developed the CASGEM Groundwater Basin Prioritization Process. DWR analyzed each of the 515 groundwater basins and ranked them based on eight criteria. The groundwater basins are prioritized as either: Very Low, Low, Medium, High, or Very High. The prioritization reflects groundwater reliance and other required factors specified by the California Water Code and is not an evaluation of the groundwater management of the basins/subbasins. The results are presented as a statewide assessment of groundwater basin prioritization. Evaluation of groundwater basins at a statewide scale does not necessarily capture the local importance of the smaller size or lower-use groundwater basins. Therefore, it is important to recognize that the findings are not intended to diminish the local importance of the smaller size or lower-use groundwater basins.

Question: What criteria were used to prioritize the groundwater basins/subbasins?

Answer: Per the Water Code, DWR used statewide datasets for the following criteria to determine basin priority:

1. The population overlying the basin
2. The rate of current and projected growth of the population overlying the basin
3. The number of public supply wells that draw from the basin
4. The total number of wells that draw from the basin
5. The irrigated acreage overlying the basin
6. The degree to which persons overlying the basin rely on groundwater as their primary source of water
7. Any documented impacts on the groundwater within the basin, including overdraft, subsidence, saline intrusion, and any other water quality degradation; and
8. Any other information determined to be relevant by DWR

Question: What process did DWR use to weight the data components that comprise the eight criteria stipulated by the Water Code for basin screening and prioritization?

Answer: Using an approach similar to the GAMA Program, DWR selected *groundwater reliance* as the primary component for the initial review and screening in the CASGEM groundwater basin prioritization process. Following the initial review and screening of groundwater basins based on groundwater reliance and “other” issues, the data associated with the first six data components were normalized by basin area to facilitate further basin-to-basin comparisons.

For more information please visit the [CASGEM Basin Prioritization](#) webpage.

Question: Why did DWR use groundwater reliance as the primary component for the initial review and screening?

Answer: After reviewing all the criteria specified in the Water Code, it was determined that the degree to which persons overlying the basin rely on groundwater as their primary source of water is the most important component for the initial screening of the basins.

Question: What are the results of the Groundwater Basin Prioritization?

Answer: The number of basins in each ranking is as follows (Draft results as of December 2013):

- 46 High priority basins
- 80 Medium priority basins
- 35 Low priority basins
- 354 Very Low priority basins

For more information please visit the [CASGEM Basin Prioritization](#) webpage.

Question: How are the basins assigned a priority?

Answer: The groundwater basins are ranked and assigned a priority based on the eight criteria listed in the Water Code. In order to determine the rank for each basin, each criteria was assigned a number (1 through 5) based on the reported information for that individual basin. Each of the criteria numbers were added together to establish a total “score” for each basin. Ranges for the ranking system are as follows:

- Very Low (< 5.4)
- Low (5.4 to 12.5)
- Medium (12.6 to 19.7)
- High (>19.7)

For more information please visit the [CASGEM Basin Prioritization](#) page.

Question: Which High and Medium priority basins do not have a designated Monitoring Entity?

Answer: DWR will compile a list of the High and Medium priority groundwater basins/subbasins and if applicable, portions of basins that do not have a designated Monitoring Entity. It is anticipated that the list of High and Medium priority groundwater basins that do not have a designated Monitoring Entity will be finalized in late March 2014. The list will be

posted on the CASGEM website. For more information please visit the CASGEM program website <http://www.water.ca.gov/groundwater/casgem/>.

Question: How can I find the ranking for my groundwater basin?

Answer: Check the Basin Summary Sheets available on the CASGEM Basin Prioritization Process webpage: http://www.water.ca.gov/groundwater/casgem/basin_prioritization.cfm.

Question: Can I see how the ranking was determined for my basin?

Answer: Yes. The Basin Summary Sheet and other information is available on the CASGEM Basin Prioritization Process webpage:
http://www.water.ca.gov/groundwater/casgem/basin_prioritization.cfm.

Question: What if I don't agree with the ranking assigned for my groundwater basin? Can I appeal or change my basin ranking?

Answer: DWR conducted five public workshops on the Basin Prioritization process in January 2014 and accepted public comments through February 24, 2014. The final basin ranking reflects input received during the comment period.

Question: Can the rank of your basin change over time?

Answer: Yes, if any of the eight ranking factors change over time, the basin rankings will be updated. For example, the rankings can be updated when new population census or groundwater use data becomes available.

Monitoring In Accordance With The CASGEM Program

Question: What does monitoring in accordance with the CASGEM program mean?

Answer: A basin/subbasin or portion claimed by a designated Monitoring Entity conducting groundwater elevation monitoring as described in the groundwater monitoring plan submitted to the CASGEM program would be considered meeting CASGEM monitoring requirements.

Question: What does "designated" mean?

Answer: Monitoring Entities (MEs) are "designated" after they submit the required components for the CASGEM program, including a DWR approved groundwater monitoring plan and the well locations, well depths, and well screen intervals for the CASGEM wells.

Question: I am in a basin/subbasin or portion that is not monitored by a designated Monitoring Entity. Am I meeting CASGEM requirements?

Answer: No. A basin/subbasin or portion must be monitored by a Designated Monitoring Entity for it to meet CASGEM requirements.

Question: How will my basin's priority affect me and what does it mean if my basin doesn't have a Designated Monitoring Entity?

Answer: The CASGEM program will prioritize the groundwater basins, and then compile a list of High and Medium priority basins/subbasins or portions that do not have a designated Monitoring Entity. The list of undesignated High and Medium priority basins/subbasins or portions will be provided to the water grant programs in DWR, State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB), Department of Public Health (DPH). Local entities that can have authority to manage groundwater, including the county, could be ineligible for a State water grant or loan. Determination of eligibility for grants and loans will be determined by the specific grant program. A basin/subbasin or portion will be removed from the list at the time there is a designated Monitoring Entity. The list will be posted on the CASGEM website.

Question: If I volunteer to monitor a High or Medium priority basin that does not have a Designated Monitoring Entity, what should I do?

Answer: Contact your local Regional Office and work on meeting the requirements of the Water Code. For more information please visit the CASGEM program website:
<http://www.water.ca.gov/groundwater/casgem/>