



## Sustainable Groundwater Management Act Plan Evaluation Pathways

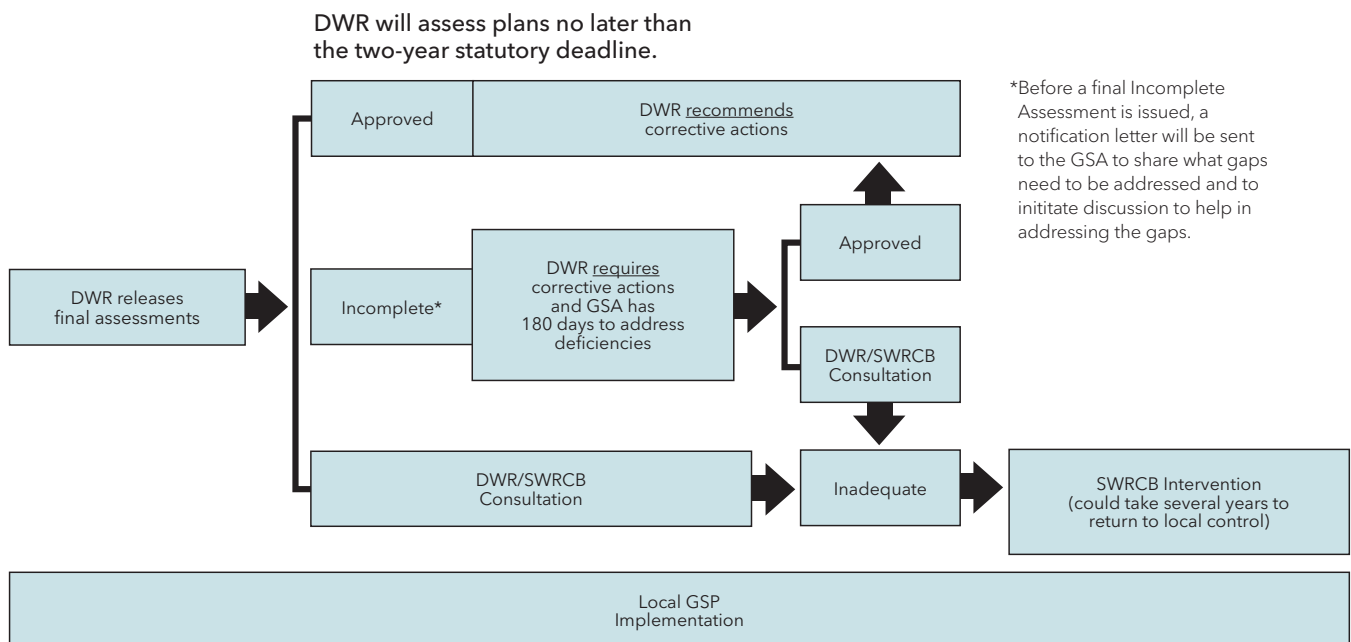
The Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) recognizes that groundwater resources are most effectively managed at the local level. The law calls for local groundwater agencies to work with groundwater users to develop and implement Groundwater Sustainability Plans (GSPs) that achieve groundwater reliability over 20 years. GSPs are roadmaps for how local agencies will ensure that groundwater resources are reliable for their communities over the long term.

SGMA directs the Department of Water Resources (DWR) to evaluate GSPs to determine if the plans are based on the best available science and information and reasonably likely to achieve the basin’s sustainability goals. Evaluations are based on specific criteria outlined in the regulations. Where there are multiple GSPs per basin or subbasin, SGMA requires that plans are coordinated and jointly submitted. In such cases, DWR will provide a single assessment.

DWR’s evaluation of GSPs will result in three potential determinations:

- Approved
- Incomplete - A notification letter will be issued before this determination is final.
- Inadequate

### SGMA GSP Pathways



DWR will continue to review GSPs and track performance over time, including reviewing initial plans when they are submitted, reviewing annual reports, and evaluating five-year plan updates.

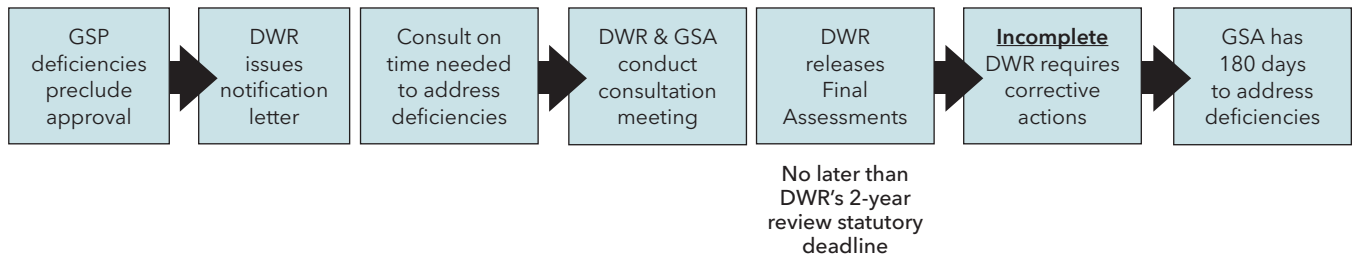
**Approved plans with recommended corrective actions**

A plan “approved with recommended corrective actions” is overall a good plan. However, it might need some additional information or clarification. The recommendations for further details or clarifications in this type of plan do not affect DWR’s ability to determine if the plan is reasonably likely to achieve groundwater sustainability within 20 years. Corrective actions should be incorporated before the next five-year plan update.

**Incomplete plans with a required corrective action**

A plan is determined to be “incomplete with a required corrective action” if it is missing information that DWR must have to determine if it complies with SGMA, including whether sustainability can be reached within 20 years. The GSA must address the plan deficiencies within 180 days and resubmit that information to DWR. If the information gaps cannot be addressed within that timeframe, the plan could subsequently be determined inadequate. Before DWR determines if a GSP is incomplete with a required corrective action, DWR will issue a notification letter to the GSA to inform it about the potential designation and what gaps need to be addressed. DWR will then meet with the GSA to review how much time the basin will need to address the deficiencies, and if there are opportunities for DWR, the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board), or other agencies or organizations to provide planning, technical, or financial assistance.

**Incomplete Process**



**Inadequate plans**

A GSP deemed “inadequate” has significant gaps that will take more than 180 days for the GSA to address. An inadequate plan can trigger the state intervention process, which authorizes the State Water Board to step in to manage the basin.

After notice and a public hearing, the State Water Board can designate the basin as probationary. If the deficiencies identified in the probationary designation are not remedied within a year, the State Water Board, after a subsequent notice and hearing, may develop and adopt an interim plan to manage groundwater use in the basin.

An interim plan is a temporary measure to protect groundwater resources in the basin until local public agencies are willing and able to manage the basin sustainably.

