



SUSTAINABLE GROUNDWATER MANAGEMENT ACT

A BLUEPRINT FOR SUCCESS? OR THE RECIPE FOR DISASTER?

CALIFORNIA FFA STATE FINALS: 5/4/19

**GALT
FFA**

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Galt FFA: Sustainable Groundwater Management Act

1. List course(s) in which instruction occurred including the number of students involved.

Related instruction occurred in the following courses at Galt High School: Agriculture Economics, 35 students; Agriculture Anatomy, 32 students; Agriculture Leadership 103 students; Advanced Agriscience, 33 students; Agriculture Biology, 166 students and Agriculture Soil Chemistry, 118 students. Total: 487 students.

2. Why is the issue important now?

The Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) was passed by the California State Legislature and signed into law in 2014 (Bowles, 2015). Until SGMA's passage, oversight of our critical groundwater resource has been uneven and fragmented, with minimal state-level requirements. Accounting for nearly 40% of California's water supply in average years, and up to 60% in drought years, groundwater levels in many areas of the state have experienced decades of decline, imperiling agriculture, environmental health, infrastructure and residential uses (Belin, 2018). To rectify this trend, SGMA requires the creation of Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs) in over 125 groundwater basins that the state has designated as high and medium priority (Harter & Dahlke, 2014). These local agencies must develop institutions, plans and implementation strategies to manage their groundwater resources sustainably for perpetuity (Kiparsky, Owen & Nylen, 2016). If local agencies fail to act adequately, SGMA directs the state to intervene. GSAs in critically overdrafted basins are required to develop plans by January 2020; those in other medium- and high-priority basins have two additional years to do so. GSAs are responsible for implementing Groundwater Sustainability Plans (GSPs) in order to achieve these goals by 2040 or 2042, depending on the state of the basin (Bowles, 2015).

3. What is the nature of the issue?

There is general agreement among all stakeholders that groundwater reform is needed and must occur should our state hope to better manage all of its water resources. However, there is broad disagreement if SGMA is the best course of action to achieve sustainable management (Hanak et al., 2011). The law defines sustainable management as the avoidance of six "significant and unreasonable" effects: (1) drawing down water levels too far, (2) depleting storage in the aquifer, (3) degrading water quality, (4) allowing seawater intrusion, (5) causing land to subside, or (6) using groundwater in ways that reduce other people's surface water or harm ecosystems (Moran, Gleeson, Rohde, Kerr & Babbitt, 2018). Every groundwater sustainability plan submitted to the DWR must have a clear path to achieve the avoidance of these adverse effects. The math of balancing supplies and demands in order to achieve the goals of SGMA is at the root of the conflict, though there are few options: overdrafted basins must either expand supplies, reduce demands, or use some combination of the two (Bowles, 2015).

4. Who is involved in the issue?

Approximately 85% of Californians depend on groundwater for some portion of their water supply, though SGMA will have localized effects based on an area's current rate of withdrawal. The stakeholders most deeply invested in the issue include agriculturists, environmentalists, rural community groups and infrastructure experts. In addition, water districts and urban areas are closely following progress with SGMA in order to assess its prospective impacts (Christian-Smith & Alvord, 2016). The parties hesitant about SGMA are those whose economies rely on groundwater use: agriculture and communities dependent on farming. Agricultural groups are largely concerned that SGMA will reduce access to groundwater in drought years, causing both direct economic decline in the industry as well as damage the economies of communities dependent on agricultural employment (Rudnick, DeVincentis & Méndez-Barrientos, 2016). On the other side are environmental groups that prioritize the benefits of groundwater restoration for ecological health as well as geologists who cite the need for corrective action to mitigate damage to canals and other essential infrastructure (Scudiero, Skaggs, Anderson & Corwin, 2016).

5. How can the issue be defined?

This issue can be defined as a conflict between immediate economic viability and long-term resource management. On one side are parties who believe SGMA will cause significant economic harm to their communities. On the other side are entities who anticipate that the benefits of SGMA are worth any associated costs. Agricultural producers and rural communities are most concerned about the potential implications of the law's implementation due to potential economic damage. Environmentalists and geologists are largely pleased that SGMA mandates sustainable yield for aquifers, which is expected to yield benefits both to ecosystems and infrastructure such as canals, roads and levees (Opperman, et al., 2017). SGMA stipulates that it is not a "one size fits all" approach and that each groundwater basin is different, thus allowing local agencies to include any and all interested parties (Bowles, 2015).

6. What is the historical background of the issue?

Groundwater overdraft has been a problem for decades, and California is the last western state to regulate groundwater use (Barringer, 2018). Although the pace of groundwater pumping accelerated during the 2012–16 drought, overdraft has been a challenge in the region for many decades (Faunt & Sneed, 2015). Primarily, landowners in California have been entitled to pump and use groundwater from a basin underlying their land. However, this unregulated pattern of use has caused unintended consequences that can be harmful to some users. On average, groundwater use exceeds sustainable supplies by nearly 2 million acre-feet per year (Conrad et al., 2017). As a result, portions of the San Joaquin Valley have subsided by nearly 100 feet in the last decade, causing NASA to refer to the issue as the largest single manmade alteration of the Earth's surface (Doll et al., 2012).

7. What caused the issue?

The California drought of 2011-2016 laid bare the flaws of patchwork groundwater management. With a history of open-access management any landowner overlying an aquifer can pump water, encouraging a race to extract. When surface water deliveries were largely restricted during the drought, pumping increased significantly (Mount, et al, 2018). Statewide, the Department of Water Resources (DWR) believes the annual rate of overdraft – taking more water from aquifers than can be replenished by rain and other means – to be 1 million to 2 million acre-feet. In 2014 as the Legislature investigated the extent of the problem, members learned that data from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) satellites revealed that between 2003 and 2009 the aquifers for the Central Valley had lost almost 26 million acre-feet of water (Keely et al, 2018).

8. What are the risks?

One analysis from the California Farm Bureau stated concerns that there would be "huge long-term economic impacts" on farms as well as local economies affecting the viability of farms and business as well as jobs. The San Joaquin Valley, the area most affected by SGMA, produces more than half of California's agricultural output. The region produces a wide range of agricultural commodities with more than \$30 billion in economic output. When related areas are included, agriculture constitutes 20 percent of the valley's total GDP, 18 percent of jobs, and 29 percent of revenues (Niles & Wagner, 2018). In the communities with the greatest levels of pumping, water costs are already higher than the federally-recommended threshold, with an average of 4-10% of household income invested in accessing water (Christian-Smith & Alvord, 2016). It is anticipated that SGMA could increase those costs (London et al, 2018). Small communities are vulnerable to groundwater depletion as community service districts have shallower wells and limited financial capacity to address water shortage concerns. Farmworkers are also vulnerable to losing jobs or having their hours reduced when cropland is fallowed (Mehta et al., 2018).

9. What are the benefits?

Benefits of SGMA implementation include environmental welfare and infrastructure stabilization. California is home to more endemic plants and animals than any other state. It is also an important stop on the Pacific Flyway, providing habitat for millions of migratory birds. The state's rivers, lakes, wetlands, and estuaries support this rich biodiversity and many are classified as groundwater-dependent environments (GDEs). Pumping in overdraft can cause groundwater levels to drop lower than the bottom of a surface water channel and water will seep into the aquifer instead of providing habitat above the surface of the soil. With less than 5% of original GDEs remaining in California, environmental benefits are often the first noted in regard to SGMA's advantages (Dybala, et al., 2017). In addition, groundwater pumping causes subsidence that damages major infrastructure. For example, subsidence from pumping has reduced capacity of two of the valley's critical conveyance arteries (Muarry & Lohman, 2018). Due to subsidence, the Friant-Kern Canal only operates at 40% of its intended capacity and is expected to cost \$400 million to repair (Kasler & Reese, 2018). Portions of the California Aqueduct have subsided by 13 inches and have already cost taxpayers \$40 million in repairs (Phillips, personal communication).

10. Is there strong disagreement on how the issue should be solved?

SMGA is a large-scale public experiment in collective action and as such, there is significant disagreement regarding the plan approval process and how to ensure local needs are prioritized. To avoid the failures of previous attempts to manage groundwater, stakeholders crafting strategies for compliance and regulators assessing them are working together to ensure the approval process is fair and transparent (Barringer, 2018). However, though there is a general agreement that action must be taken to address our groundwater challenge, however consensus has not been reached if SGMA will be the correct course of action (Mount, et al., 2018).

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Galt FFA: Sustainable Groundwater Management Act

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Galt FFA: Sustainable Groundwater Management Act

Documented Forums

Organization	Presentation Date and Time	Location	Number Present
Ecological Farming Association	3/18/2019; 8am	Soquel, CA	24
Planning and Conservation League	3/18/2019; 12:30pm	Sacramento, CA	21
Kahn, Soares and Conway, LLP	3/18/2019; 2pm	Sacramento, CA	8
Agricultural Issues Center, UC Davis	3/18/2019; 4pm	Davis, CA	19
Water Education Foundation	3/20/2019; 9am	Sacramento, CA	18
California Assembly Member Jim Cooper	3/21/2019; 4pm	Sacramento, CA	9
Association of California Water Agencies	3/25/2019; 3pm	Elk Grove, CA	11
California Farm Bureau Federation	4/2/2019; 1pm	Sacramento, CA	24
United States Geological Survey	4/3/2019; 1pm	Sacramento, CA	31
California Department of Food and Agriculture	4/3/2019; 3pm	Sacramento, CA	9
Public Policy Institute of California	4/5/2019; 10am	Sacramento, CA	8

Our first major forum was with the Ecological Farming Association, a group with members across California. The group anticipate being seriously affected by SGMA. Often these farms rely on small wells and are typically associated with areas designated as “Disadvantaged Communities” by the state government.



March 18, 2019

To Whom It May Concern:

It was an absolute pleasure for the Ecological Farming Association to receive a presentation from the Galt FFA Chapter's Agriculture Issues Team on the topic of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act. Our organization, one of California's longest standing nonprofits focused on sustainable and organic agriculture, was thoroughly impressed with the research and positions presented by the talented students from Galt High School.

The presentation was conducted at our organization's headquarters in Soquel. In attendance were board members, the executive director, staff members, including program director and communications director, and farmers. In total, 24 people were present.

The Ecological Farming Association nurtures healthy and just farms, food systems, communities and environment by bringing people together for education, alliance building and advocacy. The issue of groundwater management is important to our organization because it is an important issue to the communities we serve. Though we are not a political entity per se, many of the farms and farmers who rely on our organization for education and information are passionate about this issue, making it a priority for the Ecological Farming Association.

The presentation completed by the Galt High School students was thoughtfully crafted and developed. Our board members were impressed with the research and time these students had devoted to the topic of raw milk. The students were able to answer our questions completely and were the picture of professionalism.

The Ecological Farming Association was thoroughly impressed with the students from Galt High School's FFA Chapter and we look forward to watching them succeed in the future.

Sincerely,

Hallie Muller
Board of Directors, Secretary
Ecological Farming Association

Galt FFA: Sustainable Groundwater Management Act



Following our early visits to agricultural groups, we presented and visited with staff at the Planning and Conservation League, an organization known for their investment in environmental causes. Following the presentation, Executive Director Jonas Minton gave the group an overview of the issue from the ecological perspective, adding layers of depth to the team's understanding of the topic and helping evolve the presentation's environmental narrative.



On March 18, 2019 at the Sierra Club conference room in Sacramento, California a group of six Galt High School students gave a presentation to the Planning and Conservation League's (PCL) Senior Water Policy Advisor on the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA).

They were joined by myself, their instructor as well as another 13 members of our staff for a total of 21 attendees.

PCL is a state-wide environmental advocacy organization which is working to integrate SGMA implantation into overall California water policy.

The presentation demonstrated that the students had an excellent understanding of SGMA and its implementation challenges. In addition, their style of presentation was very engaging. There were only two minor suggestion that I could provide for slight improvements in their material.

We are proud to have helped shape their presentation and inform the group about the clear environmental benefits of the new groundwater management policies.

These students are clearly future leaders!

Jonas Minton

Senior Water Policy Advisor

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LOUIE A. BROWN, JR.
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KAHN, SOARES & CONWAY, LLP
ATTORNEYS AT LAW

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April 11, 2019

Re: Galt High School Agriculture Issues Forum Presentation

To Whom It May Concern:

Kahn, Soares & Conway, LLP is a law firm that has represented California's agriculture industry for the past 40 years. On behalf of our clients, we met with legislators and staff for Governor Brown on the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA). Since the passage of SGMA, our firm has provided advice and counsel to various clients on the implementation of the law.

On March 18, my colleague Kaitlin Harr and I listened to Galt High School FFA Agricultural Issues Team presentation on SGMA in our conference room. In total, there were 8 in attendance including the presenters and their FFA advisor.

The students chose a challenging and timely topic that will have a significant impact on California agriculture. Their presentation was informative and well thought out. They did an excellent job of supporting the various viewpoints with statistics and background information. Immediately following their presentation, the students received questions and comments from Kaitlin and me.

We were very impressed with knowledge and professionalism of the entire team. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any question in regards to this matter.

Sincerely,

Louie A. Brown, Jr.

Partner



The partners and staff at Kahn, Soares and Conway allowed the team to see both the legislative and regulatory elements of SGMA. The legal firm has been deeply involved with the development of SGMA as well as with the implementation side, helping guide conversation the DWR as well as with GSAs seeking guidance.

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At our forum with Dr. Daniel Sumner and his colleagues at the UC Davis Agricultural Issues Center, we gathered relevant information on the impacts SGMA is expected to have on agricultural productivity as well as the economics of rural agricultural communities.

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Address reply to:

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March 18, 2019

Dane White
Agriculture Department
Galt High School
Via email: "Dane White" <DWhite@ghsd.k12.ca.us>

Dear Mr. White:

Thank you for the presentation by the Galt High School Agriculture students on the effects of Over-time wage regulations me at the University of California Agricultural Issues Center (AIC) located on the University of California Davis campus at 4 pm on March 18, 2019.

AIC is a statewide program within UC Agriculture and Natural Resources. We study topics such as international markets, agricultural policy, the rural economy and farm labor trends among others. We emphasize implications for agriculture, natural resources and the economy in California. The audience for AIC research and outreach includes decision makers in agriculture and government, scholars and students, journalists and the general public.

Besides being director of the UC Agricultural Issues Center I am the Frank Buck Distinguished Professor in the UC Davis Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics (ARE). In addition to myself also in attendance was Hanbin Lee, a UC Davis Ph.D. student researcher in Agricultural Economics. Including the presenters and other attendees affiliated with Galt High School, there were a total of 19 at the event.

The students presented a thoughtful review of the issues surrounding the new California groundwater management law and regulations. The presentation was lively, engaging and interesting. We have been doing considerable analysis of potential impacts of the new law and these students hit all the most important points and explained them clearly. Their presentation was well researched and well delivered. I was extremely impressed by the quality of work of the whole Galt High team. I hope that my comments and suggestions will be helpful. Best of luck in your competition.

Sincerely,

Daniel A. Sumner



www.watereducation.org



April 11, 2019

Re: Galt High School Agriculture Issues Forum Presentations

To Whom It May Concern:

The **Water Education Foundation** was formed in 1977 when California was in the second year of a major drought and water was at the forefront of the news. Being an impartial, nonprofit organization, our mission is to create a better understanding of water resources and foster public understanding and resolution of water resource issues through facilitation, education and outreach.

On **Wednesday, March 20, 2019**, the Foundation welcomed Galt High School's Future Farmers of America (FFA), Agricultural Issues Team at our office in downtown Sacramento. Six bright and enthusiastic students arrived dressed sharply in their FFA attire, eager to present. Their mentor, Mr. Dane White, was also present. Foundation staff members present included: Doug Beeman (*News & Publications Deputy Director*), Gary Pitzer (*Writer*), Nick Gray (*Programs Manager*), Kasey Chong (*Administrative & Technology Manager*) and me (Jennifer Bowles, *Executive Director*).

The students gave a presentation regarding the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA), something our Foundation is very well versed on since it's a hot topic in the water world. Their presentation was fun and gave perspectives of multiple sides to the issue, such as farmers, disadvantage communities scientists and environmentalists. You could tell the students did their research and we very much enjoyed it! Even so, they were open to suggestions and feedback and took it in with open arms.

The students did a great job. We were all very impressed with the amount of research they did in preparation for their presentation. We are excited to see how their competition goes in May and hope we can be a valuable resource for their continued research!

Sincerely,

Jennifer Bowles
Executive Director

The mission of the Water Education Foundation, an impartial, 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, is to create a better understanding of water resources and foster public understanding and resolution of water resource issues through facilitation, education and outreach.

The Water Education Foundation is an impartial, nonprofit organization whose mission is to create a better understanding of water resources and foster public understanding of water resource issues. The group helped us understand the complexity of interrelated water challenges throughout the state.



Galt FFA: Sustainable Groundwater Management Act



As a member of California's legislature, Assemblymember Jim Cooper and his staff helped the team grasp the process by which a policy-maker determines their vote. They were able to provide feedback regarding the legislative process and the research that propelled the Assemblyman's "yes" vote on the bills associated with SGMA. We learned about the complexity of decision-making on challenging topics.



Bringing
Water
Together

April 16, 2019

Re: Galt High School Agriculture Issues Forum Presentation

To Whom It May Concern:

The Association of California Water Agencies (ACWA) represents more than 450 public agency members collectively are responsible for 90% of the water delivered to cities, farms and businesses in California. ACWA is the largest statewide coalition of public water agencies in the country. For more than a century, ACWA's mission has been to help public agencies promote the development, management and use of good quality water at the lowest practical cost and in an environmentally responsible manner.

On March 25, ACWA staff welcomed the Galt High School Future Farmers of America (FFA) Agricultural Issues Team to present on the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) in our Boardroom in Sacramento. ACWA staff in attendance included State Regulatory Relations Director Dave Bolland, and three Regulatory Advocates (Chelsea Haines, Adam Borchard and myself). In total, there were 11 in attendance including the student presenters and their FFA advisor.

The student forum topic on SGMA was both relevant and timely. For the first time in California history, the passage of SGMA in 2014 set forth a regulatory framework for sustainable, groundwater management over a 20 year planning and implementation horizon. Many of the public agencies that ACWA represents are the local entities involved with forming groundwater sustainability agencies and developing groundwater sustainability plans to manage groundwater basins.

During the presentation, each student conveyed a different stakeholder perspective related to how SGMA may impact state and local water management, the environment, the agricultural industry as well as residents in communities relying on groundwater. Each student provided thoughtful contributions to the dialog. Following the presentation, they answered questions accurately and politely and were open to feedback from our staff regarding the intricacies related to SGMA and on presentation style.

Our team was impressed by the extent of knowledge and professionalism each student contributed during the presentation. Should you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at 916-441-4545 or melissas@acwa.com.

Sincerely,

Melissa Sparks-Kranz
Regulatory Advocate

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April 17, 2019

Re: Galt High School Agriculture Issues Presentation

To Whom It May Concern:

I write to commend the Galt High School FFA students who presented to our office on SGMA.

Assemblymember Cooper represents almost half a million people in the region and one of the largest industries in his district is agriculture. I'm appreciative that the Galt High School team connected with our office.

We found this SGMA presentation to be better than some of the presentations we've seen at the Capitol! The students were very knowledgeable on the issues and were incredibly professional.

Sincerely,

Mikey Hathi
District Director
Office of Assemblymember Jim Cooper

The Association of California Water Agencies (ACWA) is considered **the conceptual author of SGMA**, having brought together a number of stakeholders to craft a policy that moves groundwater reform toward sustainability. We gathered information on the long-term development process and the group helped us fine-tune our information regarding policy dates, development goals and immediate expectations.



Galt FFA: Sustainable Groundwater Management Act



Representing a wide range of agricultural stakeholders, the California Farm Bureau spoke out ardently regarding the anticipated effects of SGMA on the industry. At our visit, staff informed our team that their representation of agriculture's concerns were spot on. Also, they helped refine our knowledge of the implications of SGMA on various crops and niche industry segments as well as broader agricultural economics.



CALIFORNIA FARM BUREAU FEDERATION
FEDERAL POLICY DEPARTMENT
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April 5, 2019

Galt High School Agriculture
Dane White
145 N. Lincoln Way
Galt, CA 95632

RE: Galt High School Ag Issues Forum – Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA)

The Galt High School FFA met with the California Farm Bureau Federation on April 2, 2019 and presented their forum on the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA).

The California Farm Bureau Federation (CFBF) is a nonprofit organization of farmers and ranchers consisting of county Farm Bureaus from nearly every county in California. CFBF members produce over 400 commodities totaling more than \$50 billion.

Water, both surface water and groundwater, is one of the top issues impacting California's farmers and ranchers. CFBF staff appreciates that the individuals from Galt High School FFA took an interest in SGMA and its effects. SGMA is considered to be the biggest piece of legislation to impact California water that has passed in almost a century. Therefore, it is imperative for all stakeholders to understand what it takes to sustainably manage groundwater. The Galt High School FFA Ag Issues team articulated those needs incredibly well, and we wish them the best of luck as they compete at the State FFA Finals.

In attendance were seventeen CFBF staff representing the Legal Division, the Political Affairs Division, the Communication and News Division, and the Federal Policy Department, as well as seven individuals from Galt High School FFA.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at cmadison@cfbf.com.

Best,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Corinne Madison".

Corinne Madison
Federal Policy Department



United States Department of the Interior

U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY
California Water Science Center
6000 J St., Placer Hall
Sacramento, CA 95819-6129
(916) 278-3000

April 4, 2019

To Whom it May Concern,

It was a pleasure hosting the six impressive students from Galt High School at our office on April 3rd. Their presentation on the pros and cons of SGMA was excellent, and Michelle Hladik (Research Chemist) and I enjoyed the discussion afterwards. We were also joined by their instructor, Dane White, as well as 22 other associates from our office including geologists, water researchers, policy liaisons and administrative assistants.

As the coordinator of USGS SGMA-related activities, and as President of the Groundwater Resources Association of California, I am very familiar with the broad range of issues and viewpoints associated with SGMA, and was glad to see that the students had done their research well, and were very open to questions, comments and suggestions. I wish them all success!

Thank you for the opportunity, and please keep us in mind for similar future interactions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Steve Phillips".

Steve Phillips
USGS SGMA Coordinator
sphillip@usgs.gov
(916) 278-3002

The United States Geological Survey was a critical visit in helping the team's understanding of the geology and infrastructure that SGMA is expected to effect. Often cited by stakeholders wishing to make arguments regarding the beneficial effects of SGMA.



Galt FFA: Sustainable Groundwater Management Act



April 5, 2019

Subject: Galt High School Agriculture Issues Forum Presentation

To Whom it May Concern:

The California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) was created by the California Legislature in 1919 to protect and promote agriculture. Today, CDFA uses a combination of tradition and innovation "to serve California citizens by promoting and protecting a safe, healthy food supply, and enhancing local and global agricultural trade, through efficient management, innovation and sound science, with a commitment to environmental stewardship" – CDFA Mission Statement. As a highly respected agriculture agency, CDFA partners with California farmers and ranchers to address critical issues surrounding the agricultural industry – such as water issues – in order to protect consumers and provide safe, healthy products locally and abroad.

The Galt High School Future Farmers of America, Agriculture Issues Team delivered their presentation on the *Sustainable Groundwater Management Act* to CDFA staff on April 3 at the Sacramento headquarters office. The staff present included: Jenny Lester Moffitt, Undersecretary and Kevin Masuhara, Deputy Secretary. In total, there were 9 in attendance, including the presenters and their FFA advisor.

The students chose a challenging topic and did an excellent job. Their presentation was informative, well thought out, and represented various sides of the issue fairly with supporting statistics to strengthen their debate. They truly embraced the passion for their character's roles, which help carry their message and point of view. Following their presentation, the students fielded tough questions from the state's top experts on the issue.

We were all very impressed by their knowledge and poise and commend them for their involvement with the agriculture program. We look forward to working with them in their future agriculture careers and wish them the best of luck!

Yours truly,


Karen Ross
Secretary

CDFA Executive Office • 1220 N Street, Suite 400 • Sacramento, California 95814
Telephone: 916.654.0433 • Fax: 916.654.0403 • www.cdca.ca.gov

State of California
Edmund G. Brown Jr., Governor



The California Department of Food and Agriculture is an executive agency whose role will be to help agriculture prepare for SGMA and coordinate with the DWR and State Water Resources Control Board to ensure agriculture's concerns are heard as the process of implementing SGMA moves forward. The Executive Staff at CDFA praised the team for the quality of their research.



April 8, 2019

Re: Galt High School Agricultural Issues Forum presentation

To Whom It May Concern:

The PPIC Water Policy Center spurs innovative water management solutions that support a healthy economy, environment, and society—now and for future generations. The Center strategically connects nonpartisan, objective research to real-world water management debates. It bridges the gap between rigorous scientific understanding and complex policy problems. It offers clear explanations of tradeoffs and outlines potential pathways forward. And it brings stakeholders to the table, providing a safe, neutral space for productive conversations. The Center has been working on issues regarding the state's groundwater management since its inception more than four years ago, and has recently produced [an in-depth report](#) on the challenges of implementing Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) in the San Joaquin Valley.

On April 5, I met with the presentation team from Galt High—six students and their instructor, for a total of eight of us—to view their presentation on SGMA from the perspective of different stakeholders. The presentation was via video conference call (Skype).

The students made detailed, intelligent arguments from a variety of perspectives. They inserted interesting and relevant factual information to back each case. But perhaps most importantly, they told each story with feeling, and were quite believable. I'm sure the broader audience that sees this presentation will come away with a better understanding of just how complex it is to manage groundwater sustain.

I am pleased to have been able to participate in their efforts. I'd be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,
Lori Pottinger
Communications Manager, PPIC Water Policy Center
415 291 4428
pottinger@ppic.org

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The Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) is a non-partisan think tank that delivers actionable research to help the state find practical responses to a range of policy challenges. The group has looked into the facets of SGMA and provided useful information about the law's challenges and benefits that were not represented in the presentation, including to urban populations, water districts and other non-industrial groundwater users.

