

Governor's Drought Executive Order N-3-23
Drought Well Permit Requirements
Effective February 13, 2023



In response to the severe drought, Governor Newsom issued Drought Executive Order (EO) N-7-22 on March 28, 2022, that included new well permitting requirements for local agencies to prepare for and lessen the effects of drought conditions (Action 9). On February 13, 2023 Governor Newsom issued Executive Order N-3-23 that replaced certain text of EO N-7-22.

Action 9 of EO N-7-22 was replaced with Action 4 of EO N-3-23. The Drought Executive Order requires additional actions be taken by local well permitting agencies prior to issuing a well permit. Local well permitting agencies retain existing well permitting authorities, including reviewing and administering well permits.

Under Action 4 of the Drought Executive Order, local well permitting agencies must take steps prior to issuing a permit for a new groundwater well or for alteration of an existing well. To address the requirements of the Drought Executive Order, all applications for a permit to install a new water supply well or for alteration of an existing water supply well shall be subject to the following in addition to the requirements of Ventura County Ordinance No. 4468:

1. (Item 4a) Consultation with the Groundwater Sustainability Agency – If the proposed well is in a groundwater basin designated as high or medium priority by the California Department of Water Resources, written verification from the Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) for the basin must be received stating that groundwater extraction by the proposed well would not be inconsistent with any sustainable groundwater management program established in any applicable Groundwater Sustainability Plan adopted by the GSA and would not decrease the likelihood of achieving a sustainability goal for the basin. If written verification from the GSA is not submitted by the applicant, the County will forward the complete well application package to the GSA and request a written verification.
2. (Item 4b) Permit Evaluation – Applicant must submit an analysis from a qualified professional (PG, CHG, or PE) with determination that extraction of groundwater from the proposed well 1) is not likely to interfere with the production and functioning of existing nearby wells, and 2) is not likely to cause subsidence that would adversely impact or damage nearby infrastructure.

These requirements do not apply to wells that pump less than 2 acre-feet per year for individual domestic users or wells that exclusively provide groundwater to public water supply systems as defined in section 116275 of the Health and Safety Code or that are replacing existing, currently permitted wells with new wells that will produce an equivalent quantity of water as the well being replaced when the existing well is being replaced because it has been acquired by eminent domain or acquired while under threat of condemnation.

More information on the drought including the Drought Executive Order is available at drought.ca.gov. If you have any questions about applying for a well permit, please contact Jeff Dorrington at (805) 654-2907.