



Northern California Water Association Groundwater Policy
Adopted by NCWA's Board of Directors December 3, 1997

The Northern California Water Association (NCWA) represents sixty-six agricultural water districts and agencies, private water companies, and individual water rights holders with senior rights and entitlements to the surface waters of the Sacramento Valley. NCWA's members also have overlying and appropriative water rights to groundwater resources in Northern California, from the Northern reaches of Tehama County to Sacramento County, from the edge of the Sierra Nevada Mountains in El Dorado County to Glenn County which extends to the Coast range.

NCWA believes the preservation of Northern California's groundwater resources is critical to the long-term viability of the region's economic prosperity and environmental well-being. While Northern California's groundwater resources may be abundant enough to meet some of California's short-term water supply needs, these resources alone can not meet the state's long-term needs. New offstream storage projects are essential to creating the water supplies necessary to meet California's burgeoning social, economic and environmental water supply needs.

Although groundwater issues are complex and views about its use are often based upon incomplete information, it is widely acknowledged that the proper management of these resources can benefit the economic needs of local communities and the environment.

NCWA has developed the following groundwater policy in recognition of the importance of groundwater resources to the region, and to the long-term preservation of these resources.

NCWA encourages its members to protect underlying groundwater basins, aquifers and resources through the development and implementation of an appropriate groundwater management plan, such as an AB 3030 groundwater management plan (California Water Code 10750), or by monitoring and assessment of existing or new well activity. The compilation of baseline information, and monitoring, of groundwater characteristics is essential for the

responsible management of these resources. This information may also be developed empirically through carefully managed and locally controlled demonstration projects.

NCWA encourages its members to identify and protect natural and artificial groundwater basin and recharge areas and processes - particularly, agricultural practices and the creation of seasonal wetlands for waterfowl that serve to replenish groundwater aquifers. Recharge of groundwater basins is an important element in groundwater management programs.

NCWA encourages its members to develop conjunctive use programs, where it is feasible, in order to responsibly manage, and maximize, surface and groundwater resources for the benefit of the local economy and environment. Conjunctive use is best defined as the integrated management of groundwater and surface water to increase water supplies, during selected times, above that which would otherwise be available if the two resources are managed independently. A properly managed conjunctive use program may be instrumental to the safe yield of a groundwater basin over the long-term.

NCWA believes that conjunctive use programs managed in conjunction with a water transfer program should be coordinated with all relevant local water transfer and groundwater policies, where appropriate. Water transfers based upon groundwater substitution should not be utilized in areas with long-term water deficiencies, or where unavoidable and significant economic or environmental impacts will occur as a result of the water transfer. During emergency conditions, such as drought periods, full and complete mitigation must be implemented to offset local impacts.