

Project: Turlock Subbasin Groundwater Sustainability Plan
Date Issued: July 27, 2022

NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY

TURLOCK SUBBASIN GROUNDWATER SUSTAINABILITY PLAN DRAFT PROGRAM ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

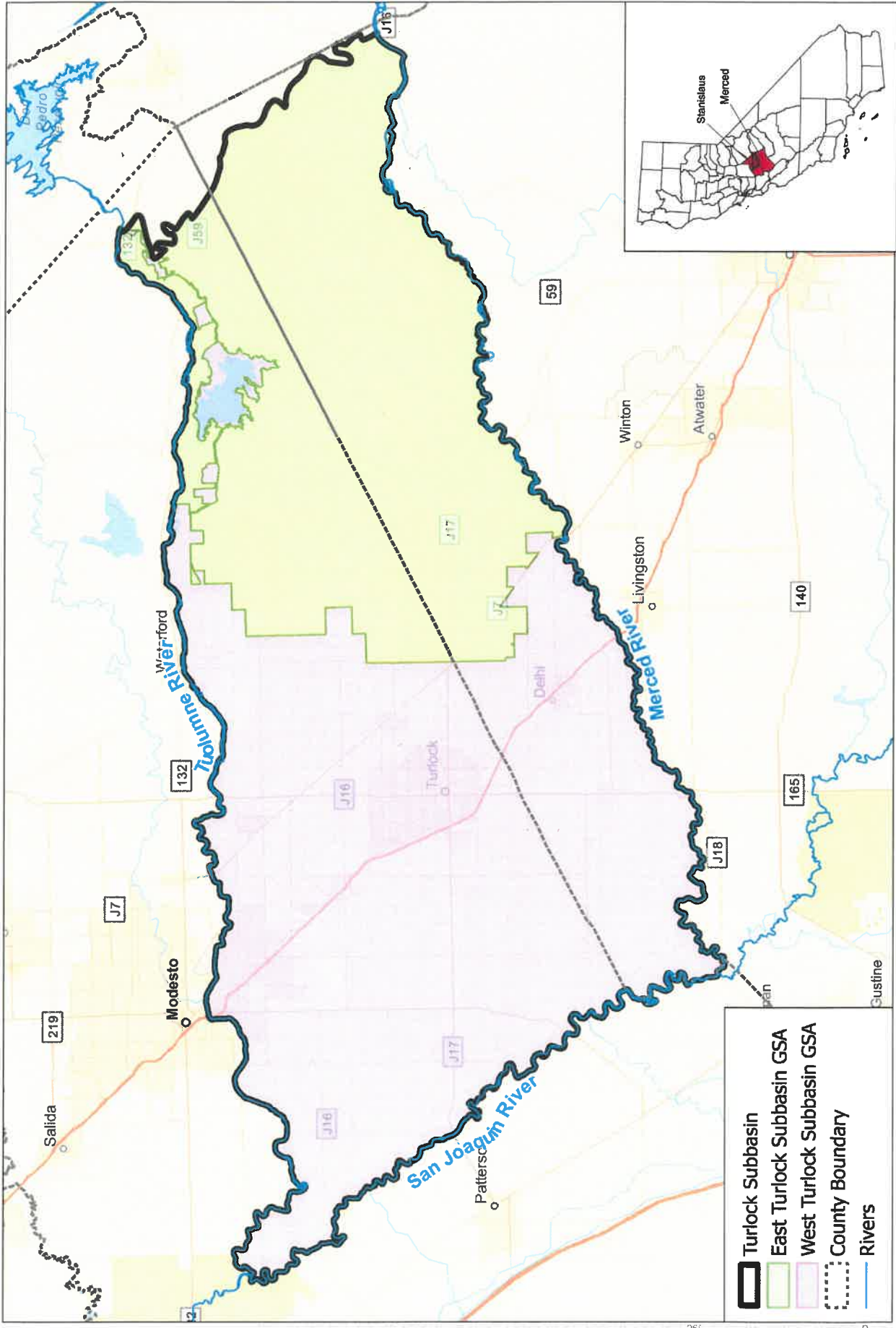
Notice is hereby given by the West Turlock Subbasin Groundwater Sustainability Agency (WTS GSA), as the lead agency pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), that the Turlock Subbasin Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) Draft Program Environmental Impact Report (Draft PEIR) is available for public review and comment. This Notice of Availability (NOA) has been prepared for the Draft PEIR, in compliance with Section 15087 of the CEQA Guidelines.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND LOCATION

In 2014, Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr. signed into law the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) to establish a statewide goal for achieving long-term groundwater sustainability by 2042. One of SGMA's purposes is to quantify the amount of water stored in groundwater basins to ensure that annual withdrawals are sustainable. SGMA also directed the California Department of Water Resources to develop regulations to revise groundwater basin boundaries, adopt regulations for evaluating and implementing groundwater sustainability plans (GSPs), identify basins subject to critical conditions and overdraft, identify water available for groundwater replenishment, and document best practices for sustainable groundwater management.

The Turlock Subbasin GSP addresses groundwater sustainability in the Turlock Subbasin (Groundwater Basin Number 5-22.03), located in the northern San Joaquin Valley Groundwater Basin in California's Central Valley (**Figure 1**). The Turlock Subbasin was designated as a high-priority, but not critically overdrafted, groundwater basin by DWR which calls for the preparation of a GSP under SGMA to ensure that groundwater sustainability goals are met. The Turlock Subbasin GSP identifies multiple PMAs that propose structural and nonstructural actions to enhance regional water supply, and allows for the development of additional PMAs as needed to meet the sustainability goals of the GSP.

Projects can be generally categorized as either urban and municipal or agricultural; they incorporate the use of new infrastructure (e.g., regulating reservoirs, pipelines, injection wells) or existing infrastructure (e.g., canals, pipelines, recharge basins) to enhance water supply and achieve the GSP's sustainability goals. Management actions are intended to be implemented in addition to projects, as nonstructural actions supporting the achievement of sustainability goals (e.g., voluntary conservation programs).



SOURCE: ESA, 2021; Todd Groundwater, 2021.

Figure 1
Regional Location

ANTICIPATED SIGNIFICANT ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

As required by CEQA (State CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.2), this PEIR identifies and focuses on the potentially significant direct and indirect environmental effects of the types of projects and management actions (PMAs) to be implemented under the Turlock Subbasin Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP). This draft PEIR assumes that the full range of PMAs would be implemented under the Turlock Subbasin GSP and provides a broad, comprehensive analysis of potential environmental effects and impact issues across the Turlock Subbasin. This draft PEIR is designed to provide CEQA review streamlining for future PMAs implemented under the Turlock Subbasin GSP.

The Turlock Subbasin GSP PEIR employs a programmatic approach to evaluation because the specific characteristics and locations of PMAs are unknown at this time. As such, the level of detail of the environmental impact analysis is also programmatic in that it addresses the full range of potential environmental effects of implementing the types of PMAs presented in the Turlock Subbasin GSP. Environmental impact conclusions are broadly and comprehensively applied to the types of PMAs to be implemented across the study area (i.e., the Turlock Subbasin).

A wide range of potential impacts are associated with the PMAs to be implemented. Some PMAs propose the construction of new features, while others propose operational modifications to existing features or implementation of management programs. Therefore, in the context of a program-level evaluation, the scope of the impact analysis requires consideration of all potential impact mechanisms (direct/construction and indirect/operations) resulting from all types of PMAs. In addition, the impact analysis and discussion should consider the type of PMA categorized according to the primary recharge mechanism (e.g., direct recharge, in-lieu recharge, combination, or water conservation). While some impact mechanisms apply to multiple PMA types, organizing the impact discussion in this way clearly identifies the impacts associated with a particular project or management action.

The draft PEIR identifies significant impacts on aesthetics and visual resources; air quality; biological resources; geology, soils, and paleontological resources; greenhouse gas emissions; hazards and hazardous materials; hydrology and water quality; noise; recreation; and transportation. Impacts would be reduced to a less-than-significant level with implementation of mitigation measures. Implementation of the mitigation measures would be the responsibility of the PMA proponent(s). Potentially significant and unavoidable impacts were determined for agriculture and forestry resources; air quality; biological resources; cultural resources; land use and planning; tribal cultural resources; and utilities and services systems.

WRITTEN COMMENTS

This draft PEIR is available to federal, state, and local agencies and interested organizations and individuals who may want to review and comment on the adequacy of the analysis. Publication of the draft PEIR marks the beginning of a 45-day public review period. The 45-day public review period for this draft PEIR is Wednesday, July 27, 2022 through 5:00 p.m. on Monday, September 12, 2022. During the public review period, written comments should be postmarked by September 12, 2022, and mailed or emailed to:

Turlock Subbasin GSP PEIR Comments
c/o Turlock Irrigation District
P.O. Box 949
Turlock, CA 95381-0949
turlockgroundwater@gmail.com


Please use "Turlock Subbasin Groundwater Sustainability Plan PEIR" in the subject line. Please also include the name of a contact person if submitting comments on behalf of an agency, tribal group, or organization. All comments received, including names and addresses, will become part of the official administrative record and may be available to the public.

The draft PEIR is available for review at the Turlock Public Library (550 N Minaret Ave, Turlock, CA 95380), the Stanislaus County Library (1500 I St, Modesto, CA 95354), and the Merced County Library (2100 O St, Merced, CA 95340). The draft PEIR is also available on the Turlock Groundwater website at www.turlockgroundwater.org.

PUBLIC MEETING

During the 45-day review period, a virtual public workshop will be held via remote teleconference on the Zoom platform on Thursday, August 25, 2022 at 2:00 p.m.

Information about the PEIR public workshop will be located on the Turlock Groundwater website at www.turlockgroundwater.org/events. A video and audio broadcast of the PEIR public workshop will be available via the internet and can be accessed at the same website.

Date: 7/22/2022 Signature: 
Title: WTS GSA TAC CHAIR