



Fact Sheet

Streamlined Regulatory Process for Aquifer Storage and Recovery (ASR) Projects that Inject Drinking Water into an Aquifer

ASR Projects Provide a More Stable Drinking Water Supply

With the growing limitations on exporting surface water from the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta and the potential impacts of climate change, the coordinated and planned management of surface water and groundwater resources (called conjunctive use) will become increasingly important in meeting the state's water needs. One common conjunctive use strategy is Aquifer Storage and Recovery (ASR). Generally speaking, ASR is the enhancement of natural groundwater supplies from sources such as rivers and streams. The purpose of ASR is to augment groundwater resources for future recovery.

Drinking Water Used to Replenish an Aquifer Poses a Low Threat to the Beneficial Uses of Groundwater

Many current ASR projects treat surface water to meet drinking water standards in an existing water treatment plant and then pump the water to one or more injection wells via an existing drinking water distribution system. During periods of injection, both water users and the injection well system will receive water from the treatment plant. Water is later extracted from the aquifer as needed and conveyed to water users in the same distribution system. This type of ASR project poses a low threat to the beneficial uses of the aquifer, because the water that will be stored in the aquifer will meet all drinking water standards.

What Has Been Done?

To streamline the permitting process and to ensure consistent requirements, the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) adopted on September 19, 2012, general waste discharge requirements for ASR projects that inject treated drinking water into aquifers. The general waste discharge requirements require that water injected into an aquifer meet drinking water standards and not cause groundwater to violate any water quality objectives in the applicable Water Quality Control Plan (Basin Plan).

What Happens Next?

The general waste discharge requirements are available for use by the Regional Water Quality Control Boards for permitting ASR projects that meet the criteria provided in the waste discharge requirements. The board's executive officer is authorized to enroll ASR projects under the waste discharge requirements.

Additional Resources:

To see the adopted waste discharge requirements, please visit:

http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/asr/index.shtml.

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