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Technical Assistance Program for Tribal Governments  
and Underrepresented Communities in SGMA  
(Sustainable Groundwater Management Act)  
Regulated Basins

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# Program Background



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# Program Background



- **AB 685 - The Human Right to Water** legislation passed in 2012, declares that “every human being has the right to safe, clean, affordable and accessible water adequate for human consumption, cooking and sanitary purposes.”
- **The Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA)**, passed in 2014, requires Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs) in their Groundwater Sustainability Plans (GSPs) to **address water-related needs, risks, and vulnerabilities for underrepresented areas in groundwater basins regulated by SGMA.**



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# Program Background



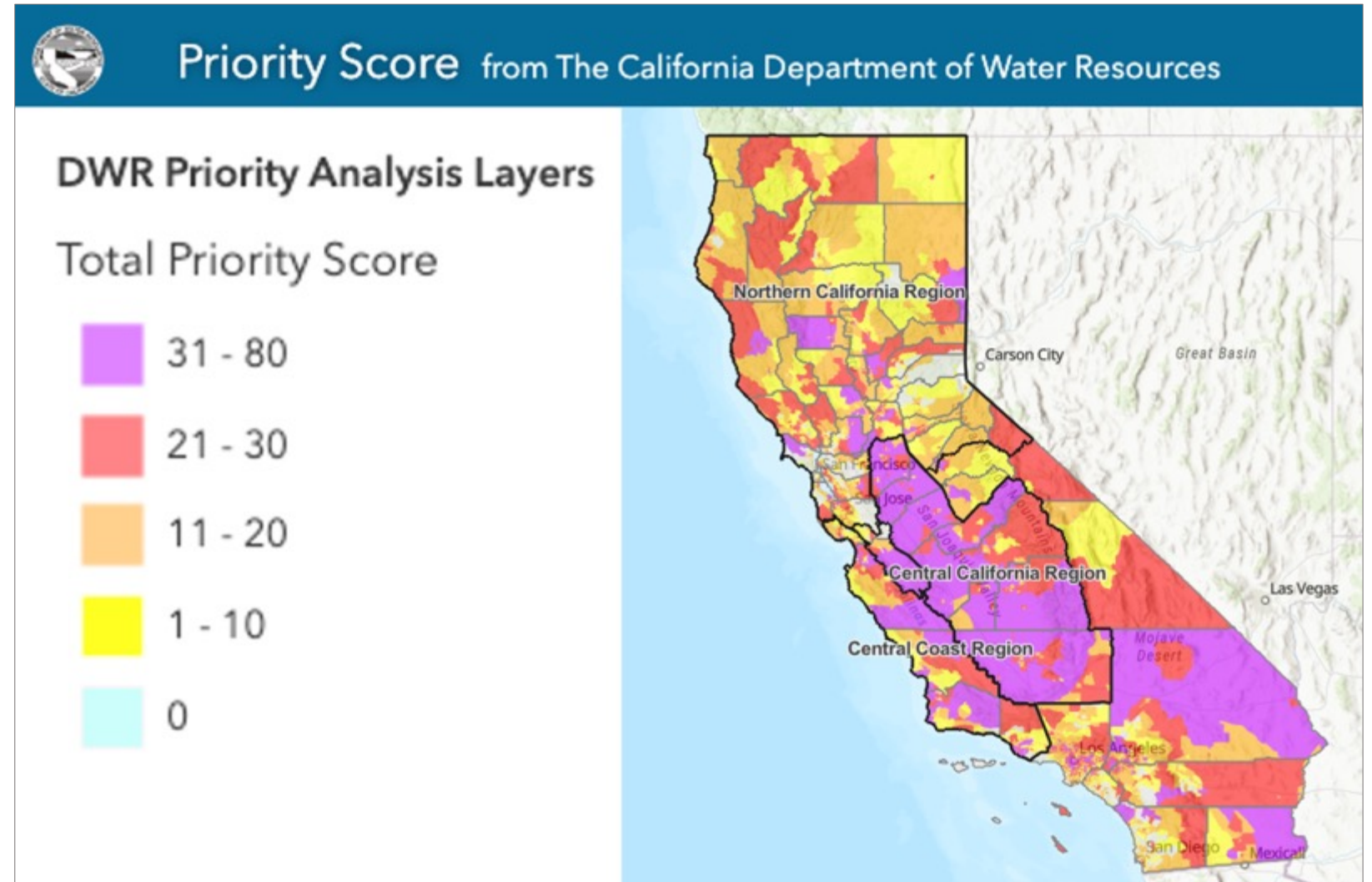
- According to many estimates, **more than 1 million Californians lack safe water**, particularly in **rural communities, underserved/low-income communities, and communities of color**.
- California is home to **more people of Native American heritage** than any other state.
- Program is for **Federally and non-Federally recognized Tribes** and Underrepresented Communities, who face **multiple challenges to clean, affordable, and sustainable groundwater, and water resources**.



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# Program Background

Dudek created an ADA accessible interactive web mapping portal for Underrepresented Communities for DWR's website.



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# Program Background

Determined relevant characteristics by which to identify and prioritize Underrepresented Communities for assistance

- Data stored in comprehensive, updatable, database\*
- Created Community Identification Tool (CIT) using a publicly available, transparent, and reproducible process
- The tools used are adaptable to changing conditions, data sources, and program priorities

Ranking Criteria		Base Criteria Score	Condition	Multiplier	Total Score
Water System Compliance	<a href="#">Click Here to Define Water System</a>	4	Compliant Water System	0	0
			Noncompliant Water System	5	20
Drinking Water Threat	<a href="#">Click Here to Define drinking water threat criteria scores</a>	5	<50	0	0
			50 - 60	1	5
			60 - 70	2	10
			70 - 80	3	15
			80 - 90	4	20
			>90	5	25
Groundwater Threats	<a href="#">Click Here to Define groundwater threat criteria scores</a>	4	<50	0	0
			50 - 60	1	4
			60 - 70	2	8
			70 - 80	3	12
			80 - 90	4	16
			>90	5	20
Basin Prioritization	<a href="#">Click Here to Define Basin Prioritization Scores</a>	1	Very Low	0	0
			Low	0	0
			Medium	1	1
			High	2	2
			Critically Overdraft	3	3
			<11400	5	15
Median Household Income	<a href="#">Click Here to Define MHI Scores</a>	3	22800 - 11400	4	12
			34200 - 22800	3	9
			45600 - 34200	2	6
			57000 - 45600	1	3
			>57000	0	0
			<b>Click here to Run Tool!</b>		



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# Program Purpose



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# Program Purpose

- The **Tribal, Underrepresented Communities and Small Farmers Technical Assistance (URC TA) Program** was developed in to:
  - **Communicate with and engage Tribes (federally & non-federally recognized), Underrepresented Communities, and Small Farmers** through interviews, site visits, and workshops to determine needs, risks, and vulnerabilities
  - **Provide Technical Assistance** services to address needs, risks, and vulnerabilities related to water supply, water quality, and water resiliency
  - **Communicate with GSAs** on the needs of communities within the GSP boundaries



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# Program Purpose

- In portions of the State, **DWR and Dudek are collaborating** with organizations that have established trusted relationships with Small Farmers.
- Some specific organizations include **UC Agriculture and Natural Resources (UCANR)** and **Community Alliance with Family Farmers (CAFF)**.



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# Working Definition of a Smaller Farmer

**Small Farmers** (*Working definition, comments taken until June 30, 2024*)  
**developed by CAFF and DWR**

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) defines a Small Farmer as an operation with **gross cash farm annual income under \$350,000.**

**This includes commercial and noncommercial farms.**



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# Working Definition of a Smaller Farmer

## **Small Farmers (*Working definition, comments taken until June 30, 2024*)**

USDA and the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) define a **socially disadvantaged farmer or rancher as a member of a socially disadvantaged group** who has been **subjected to racial, ethnic, age, or gender prejudice, or ableism**, because of their identity as members of a group without regard to their individual qualities.



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# Working Definition of a Smaller Farmer

## **Small Farmers (*Working definition, comments taken until June 30, 2024*)**

These groups include farmers who are **Black or African American, Native American, Alaskan Native, Hispanic or Latino, Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander**. USDA goes further to define “**Historically Underserved Farmers or Ranchers**” as beginning, **socially disadvantaged**, veteran, and/or **limited-resource farmers**.



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# Working Definition of a Smaller Farmer

## **Small Farmers (*Working definition, comments taken until June 30, 2024*)**

Therefore, for the **purpose of this program and use of funds, DWR will define Small Farmer as two or more of the following:**

**1. Limited-resource farm households** with low farm sales and low household income for 2 years in a row. Low farm sales means direct or indirect gross farms sales **less than \$350,000**, and low household income means less than 85% of the median household income (MHI).



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# Working Definition of a Smaller Farmer

## **Small Farmers (*Working definition, comments taken until June 30, 2024*)**

**2. A ranch or farm of 50 acres or less** that is **operated by a farmer or rancher** who **qualifies as a socially disadvantaged, beginning, or veteran farmer or rancher.**

**3. A farm who has an owner that is socially disadvantaged and subjected to racial, ethnic, age, or gender prejudice, or ableism,** because of their identity as a member of a group without regard to their individual qualities. **This includes women-owned farms or ranches.**



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# Working Definition of a Smaller Farmer

## **Small Farmers (*Working definition, comments taken until June 30, 2024*)**

**4. Beginning farmers or ranchers** who have **materially and substantially participated in the operation of any farm or ranch for 10 years or less.** All operators of the farm or ranch must be a beginning farmer or rancher to qualify under this definition. **A beginning farmer or rancher can also qualify if they have undergone a transformation in agricultural processes or are planning a transformation in agricultural processes in the last 10 years and are operating under a regenerative agricultural process, indigenous farming methods, cover crops, agroforestry, permaculture, or any other farming and ranching practices that results in a regeneration of the soils to increase carbon sequestration.**



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# Working Definition of a Smaller Farmer

## **Small Farmers (*Working definition, comments taken until June 30, 2024*)**

A **veteran farmer or rancher** is a person who **served** in the United States Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, or Coast Guard, including the reserve components thereof, and who was **discharged or released therefrom under conditions other than dishonorable**.



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# Working Definition of a Smaller Farmer

**Small Farmers (*Working definition, comments taken until June 30, 2024*)**

**Comments are being collected on this definition.**

**Please provide feedback by June 30, 2024.**

**Please send comments to:  
[SGM\\_TA@water.ca.gov](mailto:SGM_TA@water.ca.gov)**



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# Support and Technical Assistance Services



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# Support and Technical Assistance Services

- Preparation of multi-lingual materials customized to the needs of Tribes, Underrepresented Communities, and Small Farmers
- Coordination with GSAs, Cities, Counties, Resource Conservation Districts (RCDs), Farm Bureaus, Ag. Commissioner's Offices, and CBOs/CBPs
- Presentations, workshops, and coordination
- Site visits, needs assessments, and surveys
- Graphics, animations, videos



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# Support and Technical Assistance Services

- Groundwater level monitoring
  - Including instrument installation and training
- Aquifer testing to determine long-term yield and supply
- Soil moisture monitoring
- Groundwater quality testing and treatment



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# Support and Technical Assistance Services

- Analysis of well interference
- Analysis of existing well conditions using downhole video log and pump testing
- Facilitation of water well and/or pump construction and/or repair
  - Well location, design, and construction oversight
- Groundwater impact analysis for new or existing wells or crops
  - Analysis of groundwater level decline and reduction in storage, land subsidence, groundwater-dependent ecosystem depletion, etc.



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# Outcomes of Technical Assistance



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# Outcomes

- **Needs Assessments**

- Summarized understanding of the needs, risks, vulnerabilities that a Tribe, Underrepresented Community, or Small Farmer experiences.

- **Summary of Needs Assessments and Potential TA Support Services**

- Once site visit/reconnaissance/needs assessment is conducted, Dudek prepares a summary and outlines potential services/solutions .
- The memo is provided to the Tribe, Underrepresented Community, or Small Farmer and discussed so there is shared path forward on any work that ensues.



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# Outcomes

- Preliminary Engineering Reports/Hydrogeologic Reports
  - Preparation of 100% plans and specs, assistance with associated permits and reporting requirements, regional information, and sustainability indicators.
- Groundwater Monitoring Systems/Training
  - Installation of monitoring wells, logging equipment, and associated training.
- SGMA-Related Groundwater Impact Analyses and GSA Permitting Procedures
  - Impact of new wells on GSP sustainability indicators. Well permitting requirements related to Executive Order N-3-23.
- Assistance with Project Implementation and Funding



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# Project Examples

## Peer Review for Yolo County Flood Control & Water Conservation District GSA in Response to Executive Order N-7-22

- Dudek peer reviewed the GSA's well permit form to ensure compliance with EO N-7-22, which requires GSA approval on well permits.

9. To protect health, safety, and the environment during this drought emergency, a county, city, or other public agency shall not:
  - a. Approve a permit for a new groundwater well or for alteration of an existing well in a basin subject to the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act and classified as medium- or high-priority without first obtaining written verification from a Groundwater Sustainability Agency managing the basin or area of the basin where the well is proposed to be located 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 that Groundwater Sustainability Agency and would not decrease the likelihood of achieving a sustainability goal for the basin covered by such a plan; or
  - b. Issue a permit for a new groundwater well or for alteration of an existing well without first determining that extraction of groundwater from the proposed well is (1) not likely to interfere with the production and functioning of existing nearby wells, and (2) not likely to cause subsidence that would adversely impact or damage nearby infrastructure.



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# Project Examples

## City of Tehama, Water System Needs Assessment and Preliminary Engineering Report

- Water infrastructure (wells, storage tanks, etc.) in Tehama failed to provide adequate water supplies to residents.
- Dudek produced a report with recommended water storage location and volumes to comply with fire flow and maximum demand requirements.
- The report also explored the feasibility of consolidation with neighboring districts.
- The report also included a funding matrix with grant and low-interest loan opportunities.
- Tehama was approved for funding under the DWR Small Community Drought Relief Grant and was able to build an additional groundwater well.



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# Project Examples

## Fillmore Irrigation Company

- Fillmore Irrigation Company is a groundwater-dependent water system that delivers supplies to both agricultural and domestic customers.
- Dudek prepared a report to outline necessary improvements, including replacement of distribution infrastructure, additional storage, earthwork adjacent to the existing tank, replacement of wells, and the addition of a booster station.



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# Project Examples

## Plantation Mobile Home Park

- This is a small community in South Sacramento; its infrastructure was damaged due to fire.
- The community faces power outages and vandalism.
- The water system lacks adequate staffing, resources, and expertise.
- The community is completely dependent on one well.
- Dudek prepared a report detailing the feasibility of consolidation with neighboring districts.



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# Thank You! Questions?

[SGM\\_TA@water.ca.gov](mailto:SGM_TA@water.ca.gov)

[jgray@dudek.com](mailto:jgray@dudek.com)

Underrepresented Communities Technical Assistance Program (URC TA Program)



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