



Public Health Department

Jeff Hamm
Health Agency Director

Penny Borenstein, M.D., M.P.H.
Health Officer



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

September 18, 2013

To Well Drillers

Subject: Procedures for Well Permit Applications in the Paso Robles Groundwater Basin & Guidelines for Level of Severity III Replacement Wells

Dear Well Drilling Contractor:

The purpose of this correspondence is to provide you with a written procedure when you have a client proposing to have a well constructed in the Paso Robles Groundwater Basin (hereinafter referred to as "PRGWB").

As you know, the San Luis Obispo County Board of Supervisors passed Urgency Ordinance No. #3246 affecting well drilling in the PRGWB. The Board of Supervisors has certified the PRGWB to be in a Level of Severity III condition (see definition below). However, the Atascadero Subbasin of the PRGWB and the City of Paso Robles, County Service Area 16, and the San Miguel Community Services District are not subject to the Urgency Ordinance. The Atascadero Subbasin has been given a separate designation of Level of Severity I.

The definitions of levels of severity are:

Level of Severity I: Level I is reached for a water resource when increasing water demand projected over nine years equals or exceeds the estimated dependable supply.

Level of Severity II: Level II for a water resource occurs when water demand projected over seven years (or other lead time determined by a resource capacity study) equals or exceeds the estimated dependable supply.

Level of Severity III: A Level of Severity III exists when water demand equals the available resource; the amount of consumption has reached the dependable supply of the resource.

The Urgency Ordinance is available on the County Planning and Building Department's website at <http://www.slocounty.ca.gov/planning.htm>.

Please follow this procedure when well construction is being proposed in the PRGWB:

1. To find out if a property is affected by the Urgency Ordinance you can go to the Planning and Building Department's website at <http://www.slocounty.ca.gov/planning.htm>, and click on the "PermitView" icon, and do a "Quick Search" entering the property's address or APN. Then click on "Layers," and then "Groundwater," then check the box for "Area Subject to Ordinance."

2. With the exception of domestic wells that have gone dry (replacement wells) or well permits submitted prior to August 27, 2013, new wells proposed to be drilled in the PRGWB require the well owner to first contact the County Planning and Building Department (805-781-5600) to receive approval of an Offset Clearance or to receive a determination that the proposed use is not subject to the Urgency Ordinance.

3. Once the well owner has written approval from the County Planning and Building Department to proceed with the proposed land use associated with the well construction, they can go ahead and contract with the well drilling contractor.

4. Within 30 days of installation of a well or prior to final building inspection, whichever is applicable, the well owner shall provide evidence to the County Public Works Director that a water meter has been installed on the well serving the use. A drawing shall be submitted to show that the installation conforms to the technical standards set forth by the County Public Works Director.

Then each month, on or near the first day, the well owner (or designated person) shall read the water meter. All groundwater used from the well shall be measured and the record of these readings shall be maintained by the property owner.

5. Level of Severity III Well Replacement Guidelines: Domestic wells proposed to replace a well that has gone dry or is otherwise non-producing, is not subject to the Urgency Ordinance. Replacement wells may qualify to have the well construction permit and electrical permit fees waived. **NOTE: This item #5 applies to the PRGWB, the Los Osos Valley Groundwater Basin, and the Nipomo Mesa Water Conservation Area.**

For the purposes of receiving the fee waiver and determining whether the well is dry (or is otherwise non-producing) the following information is required by Environmental Health Services:

- The well owner shall submit a letter of explanation documenting the failure of the current domestic well to provide adequate water (dry well). Documentation such as: a licensed and bonded well drilling contractor's letter verifying well failure, the California Department of Water Resources Well Completion Report for the failed well, original well approval construction letter from County Environmental Health Services, and receipts for hauled water to the subject property.
- The well owner shall also verify that the current domestic well (dry well) was drawing groundwater from a Level of Severity III groundwater basin by locating the well accurately on a map, and by providing the Assessor's Parcel Number, section/township/range, street address, and GPS coordinates of where the well/property is located.

The County Planning and Building Department also has a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's) document on their website which addresses questions you might have (see website address above).

Questions for Environmental Health Services should be directed to (805) 781-5544.