



LOUISIANA GROUNDWATER MANAGEMENT

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



Who manages Louisiana Groundwater?

Louisiana Groundwater is managed through the C&E Office of Permitting and Compliance Geology Division.



What about areas outside of the Capital Region?

For areas of the state outside the Capital Area Ground Water District, C&E does NOT issue permits – the agency only receives notification and registration documentation.



Does C&E permit groundwater wells?

- For regular non-emergency operations, C&E's state groundwater program does NOT have authority to deny permission to drill wells and can only require production limits/metering/location changes for wells of greater than 8-inch diameter.
- Law/rules do require a 60-day prior notification for the construction of all water wells in the state, with the exception of domestic, drought relief, oil and gas supply and replacement wells.



What is required of companies when seeking to drill fresh water wells?

- Industrial, public supply, irrigation and similar higher volume wells must submit notification allowing C&E Geology staff to evaluate pumping amounts and impacts to aquifers and other wells in the area.
- C&E may only call for the proposed well to change location or set restrictions/metering on wells of greater than 8-inch diameter and lacks immediate authority to enforce such directives.



Does C&E have any authority to regulate use of groundwater for existing wells?

As noted by the Office of the Legislative Auditor, C&E has limited authority to regulate the use of groundwater, and can only restrict its use in areas where C&E has already identified that issues have manifested, not in prospectively impacted areas.



When can C&E declare an area of groundwater concern?

- An area of groundwater concern can be declared, upon request of a water well owner, when there is evidence an area has been impacted by water level decline, movement of a saltwater front, or subsidence caused by overall withdrawals.
 - This, in itself, does not allow any action to be taken
 - This step requires significant research and a public comment/public hearing period



What happens when an area of groundwater is declared a concern?

- If an area of groundwater concern is established, C&E can designate it as a critical area of groundwater concern and limit withdrawals of any or all users in an area if it is determined that sustainability may only be maintained by restricting the amount of withdrawals.
- C&E can also declare a groundwater emergency as a shorter-term action if a groundwater source becomes immediately unavailable for use for the near future as a result of a natural force or a man-made act (i.e., drought in a heavily used area of an aquifer).