

## **General Principles for Developing Groundwater Sustainability Agency Governance Options**

1. Eligible local agencies should work together to identify a unified and equitable approach to governance in which each local agency has a meaningful voice.
2. The governance structure should reinforce the “local management” principles embodied in the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) by ensuring that management decisions are made at the local level.
3. While local management is essential, opportunities should be found for sharing resources and management expertise. The governance structure should avoid redundancy and reduce management costs by efficiently using local staff and technical resources and agency infrastructure.
4. Groundwater sustainability planning under SGMA should build upon successful water management efforts in Indian Wells Valley, including the long-term cooperative groundwater planning efforts and adopted groundwater management plan.
5. In addition to the local agencies, community stakeholders should be represented through additional formal governance structures, such as advisory committees, to ensure diverse viewpoints are represented in sustainability plan development and implementation.
6. A robust and transparent outreach program should be conducted to provide information to and receive input from private well owners and the general public regarding SGMA.

## Seeking Consensus in Making Decisions

Consensus can be defined as a general agreement reached by a group as a whole. It is a participatory process in which a group thinks and feels together on route to their decision. Although unanimous agreement is preferred, it is not necessary to achieve consensus. Individuals can express support for a proposal along a continuum.

- Some members may strongly support a proposal
- Some members may accept the proposal as workable
- Some members may be able to live with the proposal
- Some members may stand aside by verbally noting disagreement, yet allowing the decision to move forward

Any of these positions constitutes consensus.

However,

- If a member finds a proposal unacceptable, the group should attempt to make every effort to satisfy the concerns of that member who cannot accept the proposals so all will be able to allow the proposal to move forward.
- If the group cannot reach consensus (this member continues to find the proposal unacceptable), the group will vote based on agreed upon voting rules and decide how to acknowledge the dissenting group member.