



LandFlex

An innovative solution protecting drinking water wells in drought-stricken communities.



Wells in vulnerable communities are going dry because groundwater is being pumped faster than it can be replenished. It's a problem that requires all of us to work together. The Department of Water Resources (DWR) is partnering with farmers, local government agencies, and non-governmental organizations to launch the LandFlex program. LandFlex will provide incentives to farmers to limit unsustainable groundwater pumping, leaving more water in the ground for drinking water wells.

In response to the Governor's *California's Water Supply Strategy, Adapting to a Hotter, Drier Future* and, as California enters its fourth year of drought, the shrinking groundwater supply underscores the need for action. The Department of Water Resources (DWR) will launch the LandFlex Program as a new and innovative tool to protect drinking water wells.

LandFlex will provide \$25 million in block grants to local government agencies to grant to farmers. The program will incentivize farmers to limit agricultural groundwater use near drought-stricken communities whose drinking water wells have gone dry or are close to going dry. LandFlex will provide community benefits such as reduced pressures on drinking water wells, groundwater overdraft prevention, and climate resilience.

Funding for Farmers:

LandFlex will provide financial incentives to farmers for each enrolled acre. To ensure small and mid-sized farms have access to the program, eligibility is limited to farmers with a 3-year average Adjusted Gross Income of \$2.5 million or less. No individual grant will be greater than \$2.5 million. Farmers are identified based on their proximity to drinking water wells that have gone dry or are in jeopardy of going dry.

Farmers receive incentives for the following actions:

- **Provide Immediate Drought Relief** by fallowing land for 1 year. For each acre-foot of water saved in the ground a farmer will receive up to a cap of \$350. GSAs will determine a locally appropriate payment amount per acre-foot.
- **Long-Term Elimination of Groundwater Overdraft.** A farmer will receive \$1000 to permanently eliminate each acre-foot of annual pumping that exceeds locally determined groundwater sustainable yield levels.

- **Transition to more climate resilient ag practices.**

Depending on current land uses the farmer could receive between \$250-\$2,800/acre for the removal of permanent tree crops, purchasing upcycled ag waste for dairy feed replacement, and planting cover crops that use natural rainfall to grow.

LandFlex will give the agricultural community an opportunity to transition now to more sustainable practices and help their local communities in the face of an uncertain water future.

Partnerships:

Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs) are the local government agencies that will be responsible for identifying vulnerable communities and providing grants to farmers. To assist GSAs with this task, DWR has partnered with Self-Help Enterprises, Community Alliance with Family Farmers, Western United Dairies Foundation, and the Almond Alliance to provide technical assistance. These partnerships will ensure:

- Equitable participation by a broad socioeconomic spectrum of farmers
- Investments that provide the greatest benefit to vulnerable communities impacted by drought and groundwater overdraft
- Increased compliance with Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) requirements by reducing groundwater overdraft

These partnerships are important to ensure success of the program and transparency of state investments.

For more information about the LandFlex pilot program and to apply, visit www.water.ca.gov/landflex