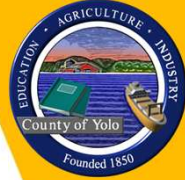




Agricultural Well Permitting

Department of Community Services
Division of Environmental Health

Agricultural Well Permitting Process



Prior to March 2022

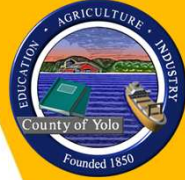
- Applied minimum well standards under Title 6, Chapter 8 of the Yolo County Code of Ordinances (YCC)
- Well construction standards under California Department of Resources (DWR) Bulletin 74

March 28, 2022- September 5, 2024

- Executive Order (EO) N-7-22 and EO N-3-23
- Required YSGA review for consistency with Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP)
- Required the County to determine:
 1. Not likely to interfere with the production and function of existing nearby wells
 2. Not likely to cause subsidence that would adversely impact or damage nearby infrastructure

October 22, 2024- Present

- Urgency Ordinance No. 1569 adopted by Board of Supervisors to continue well permitting requirements developed under EO including:
 - YSGA verification review
 - New wells must meet required distances from nearby wells as shown in Table 1 of the Urgency Ordinance



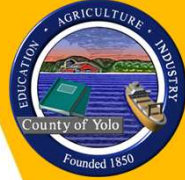
Potential Changes to Urgency Ordinance No. 1569

Urgency Ordinance No. 1569 is in effect until October 31, 2025. Staff recommends coming back to the Board on October 7, 2025, with recommended changes to and extension of the Urgency Ordinance

Changes for consideration pending a long-term update to the well ordinance:

1. Permit Appeal Process
 - Staff recommends changing the appeals process for well permits to align with other County land use types so that appeals are first to be heard by an administrative hearing officer or the Planning Commission
2. Verification of pumping capacity
 - a. Well Casing Diameter and Pumping Capacity Guidance developed by Luhdorff & Scalmanini, Consulting Engineers (LSCE)
 - b. Verification after pump installation
 - c. Meters for new wells

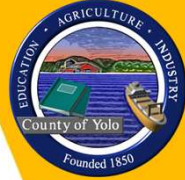
Potential Changes to Urgency Ordinance No. 1569



Options requiring more in-depth review and study:

3. Additional hydrogeologic review with consultant retained or approved by the County within the Focus Areas to determine likelihood that extractions from a new well will cause impacts to the groundwater levels.
4. Require use permits or other discretionary review of crop conversions in certain agricultural areas

With each option the Board will need to consider staff and consultant resources required for implementation and possible enforcement

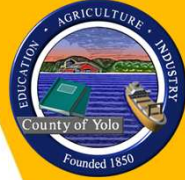


Temporary 45-Day Moratorium Option

The steady increase in conversion of dry-farmed or unirrigated lands to perennial crops in the Focus Areas has raised significant concerns.

Reasons to consider a temporary moratorium on new agricultural wells in the Focus Areas

- A moratorium would temporarily halt the issuance of new agricultural well permits in the denoted Focus Areas, including parcels that may be partially included in the Focus Areas
- While longer term ordinance changes are considered to address these concerns, without a moratorium, new wells could be approved in the Focus Areas where data gaps and groundwater sustainability are of particular concern
- No limitations currently exist in the County's Zoning Regulations with respect to crop conversions on agriculturally zoned-lands
- YSGA continues to improve and enhance its groundwater model to better estimate the Yolo Subbasin's sustainable yield, including enhancements to better forecast land use changes and their impact on water budget



Pending Agricultural Well Permit Applications

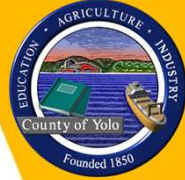
- There are currently 35 pending agricultural well permit applications
- 20 of the pending agricultural well permit applications are in the YSGA review que, 11 of which are in the Focus Areas
- Many of the applications have been idling in the queue for quite some time

Application Year	Total Ag Well Pending	Total Pending YSGA Verification
2022	22	11
2023	4	4
2024	3	2
2025	6	3
Total	35	20



Working Group

- Recognizing the complexity and importance of agricultural practices in Yolo County, the Board may want to consider forming a Working Group consisting of interested stakeholders to work with YCEH staff on proposed changes regarding well permitting and crop conversions. Proposed members would include:
 - YSGA
 - Farm Bureau
 - Well Drillers
 - Concerned Citizens
- YSGA has already formed a Hungry Hollow Working Group to recommend projects and management actions to the YSGA's Executive Officer until the YSGA Board of Directors forms a Management Area Public Advisory Committee
- If the Board is interested in this option, staff can return in October with a proposed outline or charter



Recommended Actions

- Receive public comment
- Provide feedback on proposed changes to the well permitting procedures under Urgency Ordinance No. 1569
 - Permit appeal process
 - Verification of pumping capacity
 - Additional hydrogeologic review
 - Review of crop conversions
- Consider adoption of temporary 45-Day Moratorium on approval of new agricultural water well permits in the YSGA Focus Areas. Implementation of which would require:
 - Determine adoption of the ordinance is exempt from CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines, Sections 15060(c)(2), 10561(b)(3), and 15306(Class 6)
 - Adopt the proposed urgency ordinance and set a noticed public hearing on October 7, 2025 to consider whether to extend the 45-day moratorium and whether to modify and extend Urgency Ordinance No. 1569 for Non-Focus Area agricultural well permits
- Consider and provide direction to staff regarding formation of a Working Group consisting of key stakeholders