

November 4, 2025

ORDINANCE NO. 1579

BY Paul Higley
DEPUTY CLERK OF THE BOARD

**AN ORDINANCE OF THE YOLO COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS AMENDING
TITLE 6, CHAPTER 8 OF THE YOLO COUNTY CODE OF ORDINANCES
REGARDING WELL PERMITS**

The Board of Supervisors of the County of Yolo ordains as follows:

SECTION 1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Ordinance is to amend Yolo County’s Title 6, Chapter 8 of the Yolo County Code of Ordinances regarding the standards, conditions, and regulations for well permits (“Well Permit Ordinance”) to codify the changes developed to well permitting procedures in response to the Governor’s Executive Orders during the 2020-22 drought and continued temporarily with Urgency Ordinance No. 1569.

The Well Permit Ordinance codifies the following requirement for new irrigation/agricultural wells:

- GSA Review: Review by the applicable groundwater sustainability agency (GSA) as required by each GSA, which will primarily be the Yolo Sustainable Groundwater Agency (YSGA) for most irrigation/agricultural well applications in Yolo County. The purpose of this step is to ensure that new irrigation/agricultural wells are reviewed by the GSA for consistency with the applicable Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) and will not decrease the likelihood of achieving a groundwater basin sustainability goal. While the County is the local enforcement agency responsible for issuing permits for groundwater wells in the County to ensure consistency with the Yolo County Code and other regulatory requirements to protect the quality of groundwater via public health and safety construction standards, the GSAs within each of the three subbasins in the County are responsible for implementing the GSP covering their jurisdiction and managing groundwater in a manner that is consistent with the GSP. The GSPs have defined sustainable management criteria (SMC) including minimum thresholds, measurable objectives, and undesirable results for all applicable sustainability indicators. The GSAs in the three subbasins have the authority and responsibility to ensure groundwater management is sustainable in the subbasins and undesirable results are avoided including through implementation of management actions and projects, as needed. Given this authority and expertise of GSAs, continued coordination and GSA review of agricultural well permits are of significant importance, as the Legislature recognized with the adoption of Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) and establishment of GSAs.
- Well Separation Distances to Minimize Impacts to Nearby Wells: Comply with well separation distance requirements that were developed for the County by Luhdorff & Scalmanini Consulting Engineers.

Domestic wells (wells producing less than two acre-feet per year for individual domestic water use), public supply system wells as defined in Health & Safety Code § 116275, monitoring wells or other wells not intended for extraction of groundwater, and minor alterations to certain existing wells are exempt from these additional well permitting requirements.

SECTION 2. AMENDMENTS TO TITLE 6, CHAPTER 8 OF THE YOLO COUNTY CODE OF ORDINANCES

Title 6, Chapter 8 of the Yolo County Code of Ordinances is hereby amended as reflected in Attachment 1 to this Ordinance. The specific sections amended herein are Sections 6-8.422, 6-8.804, 6-8.806, 6-8.807, 6-8.808, 6-8.809, 6-8.810, 6-8.1004, 6-8.1005, 6-8.1012, and 6-8.1013 of the Well Permit Ordinance.

SECTION 3. CEQA FINDING

The Board of Supervisors hereby finds that it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the adoption of this Ordinance will have a significant effect on the environment because the Ordinance will simply maintain requirements for well separation distances and GSA review to protect nearby wells against impacts of new irrigation/agricultural wells. It is therefore not a project under CEQA as the well permit procedures will not result in a direct or reasonably foreseeable indirect change in the environment (CEQA Guidelines, Section 15060(c)(2).) It is further exempt from CEQA pursuant to Sections 15307 and 15308 of the CEQA Guidelines (Class 7 and 8 categorical exemptions) as an action taken to assure the maintenance, restoration, enhancement, and protection of natural resources and the environment where the regulatory process involves procedures for protection of the environment. In addition, this Ordinance is exempt from CEQA pursuant to Section 15061(b)(3) of the CEQA Guidelines because it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that this Ordinance may have a significant effect on the environment.

SECTION 4. SEVERABILITY

If any section, sub-section, sentence, clause, or phrase of this Ordinance is held by a court of competent jurisdiction to be invalid, such decision shall not affect the remaining portions this Ordinance. The Board of Supervisors hereby declares that it would have passed this Ordinance, and each section, sub-section, sentence, clause, and phrase hereof, irrespective of the fact that one or more sections, sub-sections, sentences, clauses, and phrases be declared invalid.

SECTION 5. EFFECTIVE DATE

This Ordinance shall take effect and be in force thirty (30) days after adoption.

SECTION 6. PUBLICATION

Prior to expiration of fifteen days after adoption of this Ordinance, it shall be published by title and summary only in a newspaper of general circulation together with the names of members of the Board of Supervisors voting for and against the same.

[Ordinance continued on following page.]

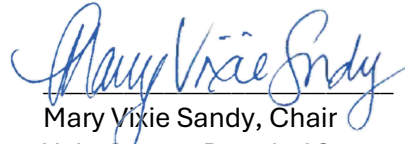
I HEREBY CERTIFY that the foregoing Ordinance was introduced before the Board of Supervisors of the County of Yolo on October 21, 2025 and that said Board adopted this Ordinance at its regular meeting on November 4, 2025, by the following vote:

AYES: Allen, Barajas, Villegas, Frerichs, Vixie Sandy.

NOES: None.

ABSENT: None.

ABSTAIN: None.



Mary Vixie Sandy, Chair
Yolo County Board of Supervisors

ATTEST:
Julie Dachtler, Senior Deputy Clerk
Board of Supervisors

By 
Deputy (Seal)



APPROVED AS TO FORM:
Philip J. Pogledich, County Counsel

By 

Kimberly Hood
Chief Assistant County Counsel

ATTACHMENT 1
**AMENDMENTS TO TITLE 6, CHAPTER 8 OF THE
YOLO COUNTY CODE OF ORDINANCES**

Sec. 6-8.422. Well.

“Well” shall mean any artificial excavation constructed by any method for the purpose of extracting liquid from, or injecting liquid into, the underground. “Well” shall include the following:

(a) *Water supply well.* “Water supply well” shall mean a well constructed for the extraction of ground water and shall include:

(1) Individual domestic wells which supply an individual residence or duplex that produce less than two acre-feet per year for use on the same parcel as the domestic well and are intended for such domestic, non-commercial uses associated with a residential dwelling and related yard, garden and barnyard uses, and small personal crops within the same parcel as the residential dwelling; and

(2) Public wells which serve three (3) or more residences or a school, employee housing facility, or commercial establishment and public supply system wells as defined in Health & Safety Code section 116275;

(3) Community domestic wells which supply domestic water supply systems;

(4) Industrial wells which supply industry on an individual basis; and

(5) Irrigation wells which supply water for agricultural and landscape uses.

(b) *Observation well.* “Observation well” shall mean a well constructed to monitor or sample ground water conditions, such as water quality and water level.

(c) *Recharge or injection well.* “Recharge or injection well” shall mean a well constructed for the introduction of water into an aquifer to replenish the ground water or otherwise contribute to ground water quantity or quality.

(d) *Electrolytic protection well.* “Electrolytic protection well” shall mean a well constructed at least twenty-five (25') feet deep for the purposes of installing facilities to electrically protect metal in contact with the ground.

Sec. 6-8.802.1. Permits: Inspections

All permits issued pursuant to this chapter shall have compliance inspections as follows:

(a) Public water supply systems. In addition to the regularly scheduled water samples, water supply systems shall be inspected at least once each year for compliance with the standards. Such

inspections shall include the source of water, storage facilities, the distribution system, the cross connection control, and other aspects as required by this chapter.

(b) Sealed wells. In addition to plan-checking site inspections, all wells required to be sealed shall be inspected immediately prior to and during the placement of the surface seal and immediately following the placement of the well in service.

(c) Other wells. Other wells shall be inspected as agreed to at the time of the permit issuance and as specified on the permit.

(d) Concealing materials. Any concealing material which prevents an inspection shall be removed for inspection, and replacement shall be at the contractor's expense. It shall be the responsibility of the contractor to call for the inspections at the appropriate times.

(e) Fees. Fees shall be charged to the extent and as provided in Section 6-8.805 of this article.

Sec. 6-802.1. Permits: Reports

~~(f)(a) Well Completion Reports; Verification of Pumping Capacity for Irrigation Wells. As required by section 13751 of the California Water Code, which may be amended from time to time, every person who digs, bores, or drills a well, abandons or destroys such a well, or deepens or re-perforates such a well; shall file a Well Completion Report of that well with the Department of Water Resources and the Enforcement Officer within 60 days of the date of completion.~~

~~(b) Well Pumping Capacity report: In addition to the well completion report, reports submitted to the Enforcement Officer for new irrigation wells must also include a well pumping report verifying the pumping capacity of the irrigation/agricultural well after the pump is installed and prior to production must be submitted to the Enforcement Officer.~~

Sec. 6-8.804. Application and Permits: Term; Expiration.

~~(a) (a) Permits to supply water for domestic uses shall be void immediately upon the occurrence of a material change in the operation of the supply system.~~

~~(b) Each application submitted for a permit for the construction, reconstruction, repair, abandonment, or change in use of a well shall expire and become null and void within one (1) year of the date of submittal unless a permit is issued as set forth in 6-8.804(c).~~

~~(c) Prior to the expiration of the application as provided under 6-8.804(b), the applicant holding an unexpired well application may apply for an extension of time for a period not exceeding one hundred eighty (180) days. No application shall be extended more than once.~~

~~(d) Permits for the construction, reconstruction, repair, abandonment, or change in use of a well shall expire and become null and void if the work authorized by such permit is not completed/commenced within 120 days/two years after the issuance date of such permit, or if the~~

building or work authorized by such permit is suspended or abandoned at any time after the work is commenced for a period of 120 days. Before such work may be resumed, a new permit shall be first obtained to do so, and a fee therefor shall be charged of one-half (1/2) the amount required for a new permit for such work provided no changes have been made or will be made in the original plans and specifications for such work and provided, further, the period of suspension or abandonment does not exceed one year.

(de) Permits may be extended for up to two additional years provided that no changes have been made or will be made to the original approved plans and specifications. The extension request must be made prior to the permit expiration date and the permit may only be extended one time.

(efd) All well permit application and permit extensions authorized in this Section 6-8.804 are subject to compliance with the well permitting procedures in effect at the time the new permit is approved.

(eg) Permits for the construction, reconstruction, repair, abandonment, or change in use of a well shall be secured prior to the start of any work. Failure to secure the permit prior to the start of the work shall result in the permittee being assessed a penalty equal in cost to the permit fee (double fees for permits). The only exception made shall be for emergency repairs, as set forth in subsection ((f) of Section 6-8.606 of Article 6 of this chapter.

Sec. 6-8.806. Permits: Decision by Enforcement Officer: Appeals.

All decisions, determinations, and actions of the Enforcement Officer as to applications for permits may be appealed to the Board-Planning Commission by any aggrieved person pursuant to Section 8-2.225 of the Yolo County Code of Ordinances. A decision of an appeal to the Planning Commission may be appealed to the Board of Supervisors in the same manner.

Sec. 6-8.807. Decisions of Enforcement Officer: Finality and validity.

The decision of the Enforcement Officer rendered pursuant to the provisions of this chapter shall be final, unless appealed to the Board-Planning Commission within thirty (30) days after such decision is rendered in writing, and notice of the same is given to the applicant by certified mail the time period established in Section 8-2.225 of the Yolo County Code of Ordinances.

Sec. 6-8.808. Appeals: Procedure.

Appeals from all orders, decisions, and determinations of the Enforcement Officer shall be made in writing, and shall specify and set forth the grounds for the appeal; and shall be filed by the appellant with the Clerk of the Board. The Board-Planning Commission shall set the matter for a hearing and give notice of such hearing as provided in Section 8-2.225 of the Yolo County Code of Ordinances no later than thirty (30) days after such filing and shall give the appellant and all concerned persons no less than fifteen (15) days' written notice of such date of hearing by certified mail.

Sec. 6-8.809. Appeals: Hearings and determinations.

~~Upon hearing the appeal, the Board shall grant the permit, or grant the permit upon conditions, if it is found that the project or activity applied for meets the standards contained in or determined as set forth and described in this chapter. Permit appeals shall be heard and determined in accordance with Section 8-2.225 of the Yolo County Code of Ordinances.~~

~~In the event the applied-for project or activity fails to meet and comply with the standards contained in or determined as set forth in this chapter, the Board shall deny the application.~~

~~The Board, for good cause shown, may impose other conditions or requirements for such permit.~~

Sec. 6-8.810. Decisions of Board: Finality and validity.

Any action or proceeding to attack, review, set aside, void, or annul the decision of the ~~Board Planning Commission or the Board of Supervisors, if applicable, of an appeal filed pursuant to this article or of any of the proceedings, acts, or determinations taken, done or made prior to such decision, or to determine the reasonableness, legality, or validity of any condition attached thereto,~~ shall not be maintained by any person, unless such action or proceeding is commenced and the service of the summons effected within thirty (30) days after the date of the rendition in writing of such decision.

Sec. 6-8.812. Permits: Revocation.

Any permit issued pursuant to this chapter may be revoked by the ~~Board Planning Commission~~ consistent with the procedures in Section 8-2.225 of the Yolo County Code of Ordinances upon a petition by the Enforcement Officer if ~~the Board~~ it finds that:

- (a) The activity or project has caused or become a public nuisance; or
- (b) The permittee has violated a condition of the permit; or
- (c) Due to a change of circumstances and conditions at the site of the activity or project, the continuance of the project is hazardous to the public health, welfare, or safety; or
- ~~(d)~~ (d) The applicant for the permit made a material misrepresentation of fact in his application.

Sec. 6-8.1004. Water supply wells: Locations.

(a) All water supply wells shall be located a safe distance from potential sources of contamination and pollution.

(b) No water supply well shall be located within the minimum distances from the features specified in Table No. 3 set forth in Section 6-8.1005 of this article.

(c) No irrigation well shall be located within the minimum distances from other wells specified in Table No. 4 set forth in Section 6-8.1005 of this article unless exempt from Table No. 4 as provided in Section 6-8.1005 of this article. The County requires minimum well separation distances for ensuring proposed new irrigation wells or irrigation well alterations are unlikely to interfere with the function and operation of nearby wells. Table No. 4, below, presents these minimum required distances from nearby active wells, excluding wells to be abandoned upon completion of the new replacement well if applicable, according to the proposed well pumping capacity and proposed well location in relation to Valley Floor or Upland areas. The minimum well separation distances in Table No. 4 were developed with consideration of the hydrogeologic and well characteristics within the County.

(ed) The location of each water supply well for which an application is made shall be approved by the Enforcement Officer.

Sec. 6-8.1005. Water supply wells: Spacing.

(a) – Table No. 3, referred to in Section 6-8.1004**(b)** of this article, is set forth as follows:

**TABLE NO. 3
Water Supply Well Spacing (Feet)**

	Individual Domestic Wells	Public or Community Domestic Wells	Irrigation Wells	Other Wells
Septic tank or sewer line	50	150	50	100
Leach field	100	150	100	100
Public road right-of-way	----	100	----	50
Property lines	----	50	----	50
Animal or fowl intense confinement	100	100	100	100
Hazardous substance operations	100	100	100	100

(b) Table No. 4, referred to in Section 6-8.1004(c) of this article, is set forth as follows:

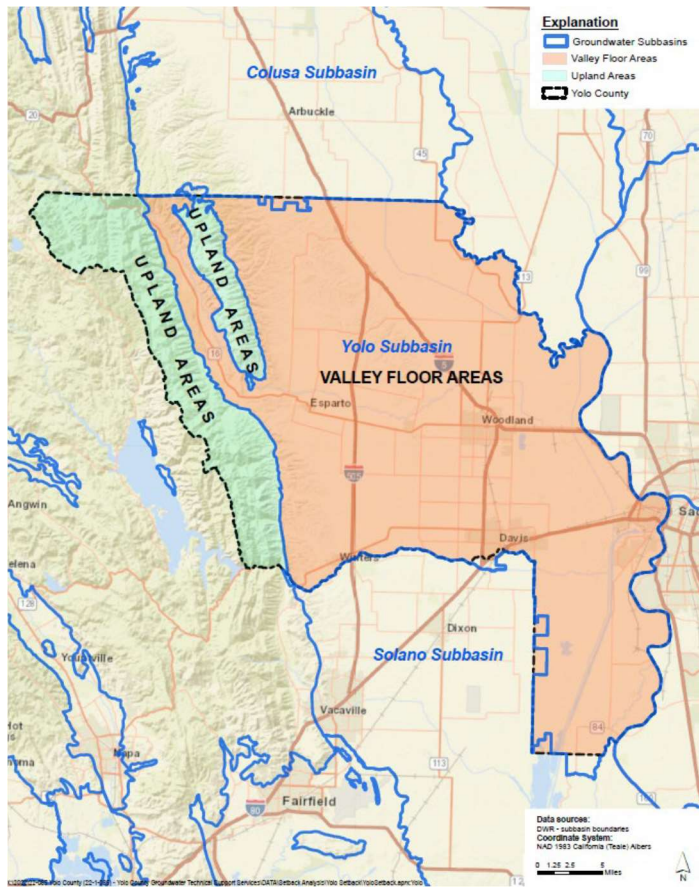
TABLE NO. 4

Irrigation Well Spacing (Feet) from Other Wells

<u>Pumping Capacity (gallons per minute)</u>	<u>Minimum Well Separation Distance (feet)</u>
<i><u>Irrigation Wells Within the Valley Floor Areas of the County</u></i>	
<u><500</u>	<u>250</u>
<u>500-999</u>	<u>500</u>
<u>1000-1499</u>	<u>1000</u>
<u>1500-1999</u>	<u>2000</u>
<u>≥2000</u>	<u>Report Required</u>
<i><u>Irrigation Wells in the Upland Areas of the County</u></i>	
<u><15</u>	<u>500</u>
<u>15-99</u>	<u>1000</u>
<u>≥100</u>	<u>Report Required</u>

Note: For Delineation of Valley Floor Areas and Upland Areas, refer to Graph 1.

Graph 1: Map of Groundwater Subbasins Overlapping Yolo County with Delineation of Valley Floor and Upland Areas



For all irrigation wells, as defined in Section 6-8.422(a)(5) of this chapter, but excluding minor modifications to existing irrigation wells, the applicant must submit a map and list of known active wells within a radial distance equal to the minimum separation distance set forth in **Table No. 4**, plus 500 feet. The map should include the proposed well site with known nearby active domestic, public supply, agricultural/irrigation, industrial, or other groundwater production wells. Active wells include wells recently operated (within last five years) as production wells and equipped with an operational pumping and discharge assembly, or wells in the process of being prepared to be operated. The table listing known nearby wells must include the well type, latitude/longitude coordinates, distance from the proposed well site (in feet), and Assessor's Parcel Number (APN). Any wells owned by the applicant should be indicated on the map and list of nearby wells. The Enforcement Officer will review the information on nearby wells provided by the applicant in conjunction with additional review of available well location information from the Division of Environmental Health's database to confirm the minimum well separation is satisfied. However, it is the responsibility of the permit applicant to investigate and confirm the accuracy and completeness of the list of nearby wells.

(c) Exceptions to Table No. 4 separation distance requirements. For purposes of Table No. 4, an irrigation well does not include:

- (1) Minor Modifications. Minor modifications to existing irrigation wells that do not increase the discharge rate for the well or significantly alter the depth interval from which groundwater is

extracted with the well. Minor modifications may include activities such as installing casing liners, patches, or other work although such work must not modify the well in a manner that increases the total groundwater pumping capacity.

(2) Common Ownership Exception. Existing wells owned by the applicant that are located on the same parcel as the proposed well or on a parcel adjacent to the parcel with the proposed irrigation well are exempt from the minimum well separation distance requirements set forth in Table No. 4.

(3) Irrigation Wells Supported by a Hydrogeologist Report as set forth in Section 6-8.1012 of this article.

Sec. 6-8.1012. Wells: Exceptions from standards.

All wells shall be constructed, reconstructed, repaired, or abandoned in accordance with the standards and criteria set forth in this article and the following exceptions:

(a) *Exploratory wells and test holes.* Unless the owner or constructor completes or changes in use the exploratory well or test hole to another type of well:

(1) The location or site of the exploratory well shall not be limited.

(2) Casings shall not be required.

(3) Subsurface seals shall not be required.

(4) Exploratory wells and test holes shall be abandoned within fourteen (14) days after the completion of the test work.

(b) *Recharge or injection wells.* Samples of water shall be taken and compared to the proposed recharge or injection water for compatibility by the Enforcement Officer.

(c) *Electrolytic protection wells.*

(1) A vent pipe may be substituted for casing.

(2) Failed electrolytic protection wells shall be abandoned within 120 days after notification by the Enforcement Officer that it has been established that the well has failed and directing that the well be abandoned.

(d) *Drainage, dewatering, and slope stability wells.* Licensed drillers shall not be required for the construction of drainage, dewatering, and slope stability wells.

(e) *Irrigation Wells Supported by Hydrogeologist Report.* Irrigation wells are not required to comply with the well spacing requirements in Table No. 4 set forth in Section 6-8.1005 of this article if the application is supported by a report prepared by a licensed professional geologist or hydrogeologist approved by the Enforcement Officer. Such a report must include a map and list of known wells within the appropriate separation distance demonstrated in the report, plus an additional 500 feet. The report must also include technical analyses and justification for why the proposed separation distance is unlikely to impact the function and operation of nearby wells.

Sec. 6-8.1013. Wells: Verification by Applicable Groundwater Sustainability Agency.

(a) The Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSA) within each of the three subbasins in Yolo County are responsible for implementing the groundwater sustainability plans (GSP) covering their jurisdiction and managing groundwater in a manner that is consistent with the GSP. The GSPs have defined sustainable management criteria including minimum thresholds, measurable objectives, and undesirable results for all applicable sustainability indicators. The GSAs in the three subbasins have the authority and responsibility to ensure groundwater management is sustainable in the subbasins and undesirable results are avoided. Accordingly, the Enforcement Officer will submit all irrigation well permit applications to the applicable GSA for review and verification in accordance with the review procedures of the pertinent GSA to determine whether the proposed well is consistent with the adopted GSP. Applicants must comply with all applicable verification requirements of the applicable GSA. Most of the County is within the Yolo Subbasin and well permits in the Yolo Subbasin will be referred to the YSGA for evaluation. If the applicable GSA includes best management or other proposed or recommended conditions for the well as part of its written verification, the Enforcement Office shall include those items as required conditions of the irrigation well permit. No irrigation well shall be approved without written verification from the applicable GSA.

(b) *Exceptions.* The GSA verification requirements shall only apply to new irrigation wells as defined in Section 6-8.422(a)(5) of this chapter and shall exclude other water supply wells and minor modifications of irrigation wells exempt from the well separation distances set forth in Table No. 4 of Section 6-8.1005 of this article.