



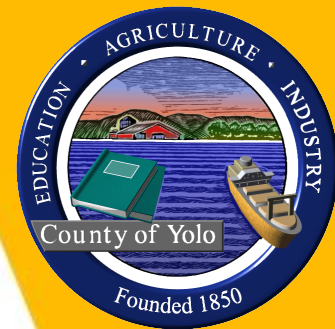
Agricultural Well Permitting

Department of Community Services
Division of Environmental Health



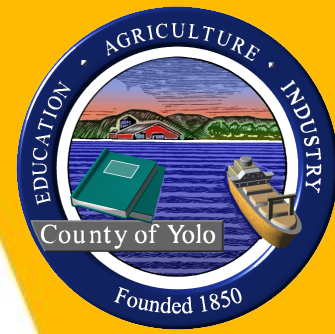
Moratorium Background

- On August 26, 2025 the Board of Supervisors adopted Urgency Ordinance No. 1576 imposing a temporary 45-day moratorium on the approval or issuance of well permits for new agricultural, non-exempt wells located within the Yolo Subbasin Groundwater Agency (YSGA) designated Focus Areas of the Yolo Subbasin.
- On October 7, 2025 the Board adopted Urgency Ordinance No. 1577 extending the moratorium for an additional 10 months 15 days through August 25, 2026 (unless rescinded by the Board prior to this date).
- Concerns were raised at the public hearing on October 7, 2025 regarding the ability of landowners and farmers to timely replace existing wells that may fail or need replacement while the moratorium is in effect.
- Although the moratorium contains a hardship exemption, the delay with such a process for replacement wells may leave a property without a well to irrigate existing crops. As a result, staff was directed to bring back a potential replacement well exemption to the moratorium.



Development of Replacement Well Exemption

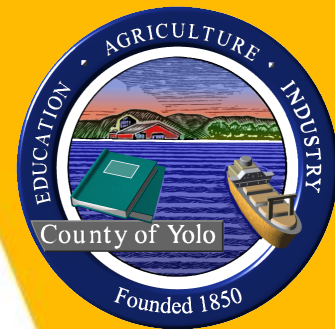
- Staff circulated a draft version of the replacement well exemption to interested stakeholders and specific proposed edits were received.
- Staff also held further discussions with these parties and others and consulted with Luhdorff & Scalmanini Consulting Engineers (LSCE) regarding the proposed revisions.
- Staff further revised the proposed replacement well exemption to allow for some flexibility while trying to balance the various interests without undermining the objectives of the moratorium.
- The replacement well exemption allows for a more streamlined permitting process for such wells meeting the criteria than the more extensive hardship exemption process.



Replacement Well Requirements

Under the proposed replacement well exemption, the following must be met for a well to be considered a replacement well under the moratorium exemption:

- The replacement well has the same or smaller casing diameter; same or deeper casing depth; and similar screen interval(s) to the existing well.
- The replacement well has a substantially similar or lower pumping capacity in comparison to the existing well.
- The existing well being replaced is destroyed or abandoned under permit.
- The replacement well will be located on the same legal parcel(s) irrigated by the existing well being replaced.

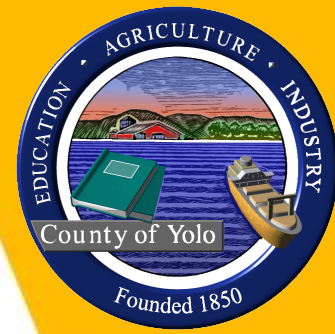


Replacement Well Conditions

While the moratorium is in place, the following conditions will apply to the replacement well permits:

- A prohibition of changes in classification of crops (dry-farmed, annual or perennial) on lands served by the replacement well.
- The applicant and property owners will need to comply with any post-issuance conditions that may be imposed to align a permit with requirements included in any ordinance adopted by the Board of Supervisors.

Replacement wells are still subject to the well permit requirements already in place for new agricultural wells including verification review by the applicable GSA, well separation distance requirements, and submittal of well completion and well pumping capacity reports.



Replacement Well Exemption Considerations

- Balances minimizing disruptions to agricultural operations while protecting groundwater resources.
- Provides a streamlined process for replacement well permits, avoiding the more complex hardship exemption process under Urgency Ordinance No. 1577.
- Maintains a pause on new agricultural wells that could increase groundwater demand.
- Supports the County, YSGA, and stakeholders in achieving the moratorium's goals — studying and developing potential well permit and crop conversion regulations.
- Applicants whose projects don't qualify for the exemption can still apply through the hardship exemption process in Ordinance No. 1577.



Recommended Actions

- Hold a Public Hearing to consider an amendment to Urgency Ordinance No. 1577 to include an exemption to the moratorium for replacement wells.
- Introduce by title only, waiver further reading of and adopt the Urgency Ordinance adding an additional exemption for certain replacement wells.
- Determine adoption of the Urgency Ordinance is exempt from CEQA.