

CHAPTER 10. WATER WELLS AND CATHODIC PROTECTION WELLS [13700. - 13806.]

(Chapter 10 added by Stats. 1969, Ch. 482.)

Article 1. Declaration of Policy [13700. - 13701.]

(Article 1 added by Stats. 1969, Ch. 482.)

§ 13700. [Legislative findings]

The Legislature finds that the greater portion of the water used in this state is obtained from underground sources and that those waters are subject to impairment in quality and purity, causing detriment to the health, safety and welfare of the people of the state. The Legislature therefore declares that the people of the state have a primary interest in the location, construction, maintenance, abandonment, and destruction of water wells, cathodic protection wells, groundwater monitoring wells, and geothermal heat exchange wells, which activities directly affect the quality and purity of underground waters.

(Amended by Stats. 1996, Ch. 581, Sec. 1. Effective January 1, 1997.)

§ 13701. [Legislative declarations]

The Legislature finds and declares all of the following:

(a) Improperly constructed and abandoned water wells, cathodic protection wells, groundwater monitoring wells, and geothermal heat exchange wells can allow contaminated water on the surface to flow down the well casing, thereby contaminating the usable groundwater.

(b) Improperly constructed and abandoned water wells, cathodic protection wells, groundwater monitoring wells, and geothermal heat exchange wells can allow unusable or low quality groundwater from one groundwater level to flow along the well casing to usable groundwater levels, thereby contaminating the usable groundwater.

(c) Contamination of groundwater poses serious public health and economic problems for many areas of the state.

(Amended by Stats. 1996, Ch. 581, Sec. 2. Effective January 1, 1997.)

Article 2. Definitions [13710. - 13713.]

(Article 2 added by Stats. 1969, Ch. 482.)

§ 13710. [“Well”]

“Well” or “water well” as used in this chapter, means any artificial excavation constructed by any method for the purpose of extracting water from, or injecting water into, the underground. This definition shall not include: (a) oil and gas wells, or geothermal wells constructed under the jurisdiction of the Department of Conservation, except those wells converted to use as water wells; or (b) wells used for the purpose of (1) dewatering excavation during construction, or (2) stabilizing hillsides or earth embankments.

(Repealed and added by Stats. 1969, Ch. 482.)

§ 13711. [“Cathodic protection well”]

“Cathodic protection well,” as used in this chapter, means any artificial excavation in excess of 50 feet constructed by any method for the purpose of installing equipment or facilities for the protection electrically of metallic equipment in contact with the ground, commonly referred to as cathodic protection.

(Repealed and added by Stats. 1969, Ch. 482.)

§ 13712. [“Monitoring well”]

“Monitoring well” as used in this chapter, means any artificial excavation by any method for the purpose of monitoring fluctuations in groundwater levels, quality of underground waters, or the concentration of contaminants in underground waters.

(Added by Stats. 1986, Ch. 1373, Sec. 1.)

§ 13712.5. [Exemption]

Notwithstanding Section 13712, all wells constructed for the purpose of monitoring the presence of groundwater which has adversely affected, or threatens to adversely affect, crop root zones are exempt from the reporting requirements of this chapter.

(Added by Stats. 1988, Ch. 622, Sec. 1.)

§ 13713. [“Geothermal heat exchange well”]

“Geothermal heat exchange well,” as used in this chapter, means any uncased artificial excavation, by any method, that uses the heat exchange capacity of the earth for heating and cooling, in which excavation the ambient ground temperature is 30 degrees Celsius (86 degrees Fahrenheit) or less, and which excavation uses a closed loop fluid system to prevent the discharge or escape of its fluid into surrounding aquifers or other geologic formations. Geothermal heat exchange wells include ground source heat pump wells.

(Added by Stats. 1996, Ch. 581, Sec. 3. Effective January 1, 1997.)

Article 3. Reports [13750.5. - 13755.]

(Article 3 added by Stats. 1969, Ch. 482.)

§ 13750.5. [License]

No person shall undertake to dig, bore, or drill a water well, cathodic protection well, groundwater monitoring well, or geothermal heat exchange well, to deepen or reperform such a well, or to abandon or destroy such a well, unless the person responsible for that construction, alteration, destruction, or abandonment possesses a C-57 Water Well Contractor's License.

(Amended by Stats. 1996, Ch. 581, Sec. 5. Effective January 1, 1997.)

§ 13751. [Report of completion]

(a) Every person who digs, bores, or drills a water well, cathodic protection well, groundwater monitoring well, or geothermal heat exchange well, abandons or destroys such a well, or deepens or reperfomates such a well, shall file with the department a report of completion of that well within 60 days from the date its construction, alteration, abandonment, or destruction is completed.

(b) The report shall be made on forms furnished by the department and shall contain information as follows:

(1) In the case of a water well, cathodic protection well, or groundwater monitoring well, the report shall contain information as required by the department, including, but not limited to all of the following information:

(A) A description of the well site sufficiently exact to permit location and identification of the well.

(B) A detailed log of the well.

(C) A description of type of construction.

(D) The details of perforation.

(E) The methods used for sealing off surface or contaminated waters.

(F) The methods used for preventing contaminated waters of one aquifer from mixing with the waters of another aquifer.

(G) The signature of the well driller.

(2) In the case of a geothermal heat exchange well, the report shall contain all of the following information:

(A) A description of the site that is sufficiently exact to permit the location and identification of the site and the number of geothermal heat exchange wells drilled on the same lot.

(B) A description of borehole diameter and depth and the type of geothermal heat exchange system installed.

(C) The methods and materials used to seal off surface or contaminated waters.

(D) The methods used for preventing contaminated water in one aquifer from mixing with the water in another aquifer.

(E) The signature of the well driller.

(Amended by Stats. 1996, Ch. 581, Sec. 6. Effective January 1, 1997.)

§ 13752. [Availability of report]

(a) Reports made in accordance with paragraph (1) of subdivision (b) of Section 13751 shall be made available as follows:

(1) To governmental agencies.

(2) To the public, upon request, in accordance with subdivision (b).

(b) (1) The department may charge a fee for the provision of a report pursuant to paragraph (2) of subdivision (a) that does not exceed the reasonable costs to the department of providing the report, including costs of promulgating any regulations to implement this section.

(2) Notwithstanding subdivision (g) of Section 1798.24 of the Civil Code, the disclosure of a report in accordance with paragraph (2) of subdivision (a) in the possession of the department or another governmental agency shall comply with the Information Practices Act of 1977 (Chapter 1 (commencing with Section 1798) of Title 1.8 of Part 4 of Division 3 of the Civil Code).

(Amended by Stats. 2015, Ch. 24, Sec. 42. Effective June 24, 2015.)

§ 13753. [Conversion of oil or gas well]

Every person who hereafter converts, for use as a water well, cathodic protection well, or monitoring well, any oil or gas well originally constructed under the jurisdiction of the Department of Conservation pursuant to Article 4 (commencing with Section 3200) of Chapter 1 of Division 3 of the Public Resources Code, shall comply with all provisions of this chapter.

(Amended by Stats. 1986, Ch. 1373, Sec. 5.)

§ 13754. [Misdemeanor]

Failure to comply with any provision of this article, or willful and deliberate falsification of any report required by this article, is a misdemeanor.

Before commencing prosecution against any person, other than for willful and deliberate falsification of any report required by this article, the person shall be given reasonable opportunity to comply with the provisions of this article.

(Repealed and added by Stats. 1969, Ch. 482.)

§ 13755. [Compliance]

This chapter does not affect the powers and duties of the State Department of Public Health with respect to water and water systems pursuant to Chapter 4 (commencing with Section 116270) of Part 12 of Division 104 of the Health and Safety Code. Every person shall comply with this chapter and any regulation adopted pursuant thereto, in addition to standards adopted by any city or county.

(Amended by Stats. 2010, Ch. 288, Sec. 52. Effective January 1, 2011.)

Article 4. Quality Control [13800. - 13806.]

(Article 4 added by Stats. 1969, Ch. 482.)

§ 13800. [Required reports]

The department, after the studies and investigations pursuant to Section 231 as it finds necessary, on determining that water well, cathodic protection well, and monitoring well construction, maintenance, abandonment, and destruction standards are needed in an area to protect the quality of water used or that may be used for any beneficial use, shall so report to the appropriate regional water quality control board and to the State Department of Public Health. The report shall contain the recommended standards for water well, cathodic protection well, and monitoring well construction, maintenance, abandonment, and destruction as, in the department's opinion, are necessary to protect the quality of any affected water.

(Amended by Stats. 2010, Ch. 288, Sec. 53. Effective January 1, 2011.)

§ 13800.5. [Recommended standards]

(a) (1) The department shall develop recommended standards for the construction, maintenance, abandonment, or destruction of geothermal heat exchange wells.

(2) Until the department develops recommended standards pursuant to paragraph (1), a local enforcement agency with authority over geothermal heat exchange wells may adopt temporary regulations applicable to geothermal heat exchange wells that the local enforcement agency determines to be consistent with the intent of existing department standards to prevent wells from becoming conduits of contamination.

(3) The department, not later than July 1, 1997, shall submit to the state board a report containing the recommended geothermal heat exchange well standards.

(b) The state board, not later than January 1, 1998, shall adopt a model geothermal heat exchange well ordinance that implements the recommended standards developed by the department pursuant to subdivision (a). The state board shall circulate the model ordinance to all cities and counties.

(c) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, each county, city, or water agency, where appropriate, not later than April 1, 1998, shall adopt a geothermal heat exchange well ordinance that meets or exceeds the recommended standards developed by the department pursuant to subdivision (a). If a water agency that has permit authority over well drilling adopts a geothermal heat exchange well ordinance that meets or exceeds the recommended standards developed by the department pursuant to subdivision (a), a county or city shall not be required to adopt an ordinance for the same area.

(d) If a county, city, or water agency, where appropriate, fails to adopt an ordinance that establishes geothermal heat exchange well standards, the model ordinance adopted by the state board pursuant to subdivision (b) shall take effect on May 1, 1998, and shall be enforced by the county or city and have the same force and effect as if adopted as a county or city ordinance.

(Added by Stats. 1996, Ch. 581, Sec. 8. Effective January 1, 1997.)

§ 13801. [Regional board hearing]

(a) The regional board, upon receipt of a report from the department pursuant to Section 13800, shall hold a public hearing on the need to establish well standards for the area involved. The regional board may hold a public hearing with respect to any area regardless of whether a report has been received from the department if it has information that standards may be needed.

(b) Notwithstanding subdivision (a), the state board shall, not later than September 1, 1989, adopt a model water well, cathodic protection well, and monitoring well drilling and abandonment ordinance implementing the standards for water well construction, maintenance, and abandonment contained in Bulletin 74-81 of the department. If the model ordinance is not adopted by this date, the state board shall report to the Legislature as to the reasons for the delay. The state board shall circulate the model ordinances to all cities and counties.

(c) Notwithstanding any other law, each county, city, or water agency, where appropriate, shall, not later than January 15, 1990, adopt a water well, cathodic protection well, and monitoring well drilling and abandonment ordinance that meets or exceeds the standards contained in Bulletin 74-81. Where a water agency that has permit authority over well drilling within the agency adopts a water well, cathodic protection well, and monitoring well drilling and abandonment ordinance that meets or exceeds the standards contained in Bulletin 74-81, a county or city shall not be required to adopt an ordinance for the same area.

(d) If a county, city, or water agency, where appropriate, fails to adopt an ordinance establishing water well, cathodic protection well, and monitoring well drilling and abandonment standards, the model ordinance adopted by the state board pursuant to subdivision (b) shall take effect on February 15, 1990, and shall be enforced by the county or city and have the same force and effect as if adopted as a county or city ordinance.

(e) The minimum standards recommended by the department and adopted by the state board or local agencies for the construction, maintenance, abandonment, or destruction of monitoring wells or class 1 hazardous injection wells shall not be construed to limit, abridge, or supersede the powers or duties of the State Department of Public Health in their application of standards to the

construction, maintenance, abandonment, or destruction of monitoring wells or class 1 hazardous injection wells at facilities that treat, store, or dispose of hazardous waste or at any site where the State Department of Public Health is the lead agency responsible for investigation and remedial action at that site, as long as the standards used by the State Department of Public Health meet or exceed those in effect by any city, county, or water agency where appropriate, responsible for developing ordinances for the area in question.

(Amended by Stats. 2010, Ch. 288, Sec. 54. Effective January 1, 2011.)

§ 13802. [Well standards]

If the regional board finds that standards of water well, cathodic protection well, and monitoring well construction, maintenance, abandonment, and destruction are needed in any area to protect the quality of water used, or which may be used, for any beneficial use, it shall determine the area to be involved and so report to each affected county and city in the area. The report shall also contain any well standards which have been recommended by the department.

(Amended by Stats. 1986, Ch. 1373, Sec. 7.)

§ 13803. [Local ordinances]

Each such affected county and city shall, within 120 days of receipt of the report, adopt an ordinance establishing standards of water well, cathodic protection well, and monitoring well construction, maintenance, abandonment, and destruction for the area designated by the regional board. Prior to adoption of the ordinance each affected county and city shall consult with all interested parties, including licensed well drillers. A copy of the ordinance shall be sent to the regional board on its adoption and the regional board shall transmit the ordinance to the department for its review and comments.

(Amended by Stats. 1986, Ch. 1373, Sec. 8.)

§ 13804. [Effective dates of standards]

Such county and city well standards shall take effect 60 days from the date of their adoption by the county or city unless the regional board, on its own motion, or on the request of any affected person, holds a public hearing on the matter and determines that the county or city well standards are not sufficiently restrictive to protect the quality of the affected waters. If the board makes such a determination it shall so report to the affected county or city and also recommend the well standards, or the modification of the county or city well standards, which it determines are necessary.

(Repealed and added by Stats. 1969, Ch. 482.)

§ 13805. [Regional standards by default]

If a county or city fails to adopt an ordinance establishing water well, cathodic protection well, and monitoring well construction, maintenance, abandonment, and destruction standards within 120 days of receipt of the regional board's

report of its determination and those standards are necessary pursuant to Section 13802, or fails to adopt or modify those well standards in the manner determined as necessary by the regional board pursuant to Section 13804 within 90 days of receipt of the regional board's report, the regional board shall adopt standards for water well, cathodic protection well, and monitoring well construction, maintenance, abandonment, and destruction for the area. The regional board well standards shall take effect 30 days from the date of their adoption by the regional board and shall be enforced by the city or county and have the same force and effect as if adopted as a county or city ordinance.
(Amended by Stats. 1986, Ch. 1373, Sec. 9.)

§ 13806. *[State board review]*

Any action, report, or determination taken or adopted by a regional board or any failure of a regional board to act pursuant to this article, or any county or city ordinance in the event of the failure of a regional board to review such ordinance pursuant to Section 13804, may be reviewed by the state board on its own motion, and shall be reviewed by the state board on the request of any affected county or city, in the same manner as other action or inaction of the regional board is reviewed pursuant to Section 13320. The state board has the same powers as to the review of action or inaction of a regional board or of a county or city ordinance under this article as it has as to other action or inaction of a regional board under Section 13320, including being vested with all the powers granted a regional board under this article, with like force and effect if it finds that appropriate action has not been taken by a regional board. Any action of a regional board under this article or any county or city ordinance affected by the review of the state board shall have no force or effect during the period of the review by the state board.
(Amended by Stats. 1969, Ch. 800.)