

# NAVIGATING CLIENTS THROUGH COMPLEX WATER RIGHTS LAWS

Bick Law is a leading environmental law firm focused on helping clients navigate complex environmental laws and regulations. Our attorneys combine sophisticated legal skills with advanced industry and scientific knowledge to provide cutting-edge legal advice and solutions. We have experience representing clients in complex matters involving the allocation and apportionment of water rights. Our lawyers appreciate that the laws governing water resources are massive and complex and we provide the information and advice clients need to properly protect their rights and achieve their objectives.

## **California's Sustainable Groundwater Management Act**

With limited water supplies and increasing demands, the State of California faces tremendous challenges in trying to protect and manage its water resources for current and future generations. Precipitation is the primary source of water for California with most of the precipitation occurring in the northern and eastern regions of the state. However, the demand for water is at its highest in the large urban and agricultural areas in the southern, central and coastal portions of state. Moreover, precipitation amounts vary from year to year making the amount of water supplies in the state's water storage and transportation system unpredictable.

California's Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) is part of California's statewide comprehensive water plan. This legislation aims to achieve better management of the state's limited groundwater supplies. The SGMA establishes a framework for the sustainable management of groundwater basins by local authorities. Under the SGMA, local agencies are required to develop and implement plans for groundwater sustainability in compliance with the requirements of the legislation. The California Department of Water Resources and the State Water Resources Control Board serve as the lead agencies responsible for promulgating regulations and reporting requirements under the

SGMA.

## **Strategic Guidance and Representation in Matters involving Water Rights**

Water allocation and apportionment in California is a complicated process. California has a longstanding Water Masters Program designed to ensure that water resources are allocated in accordance with established water rights. Cases involving disputes over adjudicated water rights are separate from common law nuisance actions with a Special Water Master serving as the judge presiding over the matter.

The legal team at Bick Law has experience with the rules and procedures governing water allocation and apportionment. Our lawyers represent farmers, land developers, cities and municipalities, property owners, orchard owners and other entities in legal matters involving water rights. While our California water attorneys aim to resolve water rights matters outside of the litigation process, our lawyers are seasoned trial and appellate attorneys who have experience litigating conflicts and disputes over water rights.