



SANTA CRUZ COUNTY
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH



Well Ordinance Update

What, why, and how.

Chapter 7.70 – Water Wells



1. It is the purpose of this chapter to provide for the location, construction, repair, and reconstruction of all wells... to the end that the groundwater of this County will not be polluted or contaminated and that water obtained from such wells will be suitable for the purpose for which used and will not jeopardize the health, safety or welfare of the people of this County.
2. It is also the purpose of this chapter to provide for the destruction of any abandoned wells...which may serve as a conduit for movement of contaminants, or which are found to be a public nuisance, to the end that such a well will not cause pollution or contamination of groundwater ...
3. It is also the purpose of this chapter to implement policies of the County General Plan and the Local Coastal Program Land Use Plan.

Chapter 7.73 – Individual Water Systems



1. It is the purpose of this chapter to establish standards for safe and adequate water supplies for individual water systems and to ensure that such systems do not induce contamination of aquifers and therefore jeopardize the health, safety and welfare of the people of Santa Cruz County.
2. It is also the purpose of this chapter to implement policies of the County General Plan and the Local Coastal Program Land Use Plan.

Not included:

1. 7.71 – Water Systems. This chapter is not part of the LCP, is focused more on the regulatory aspect of water systems and is largely based on state law, and was updated in 2015.
2. Wells drilled within cities – Each city has their own approach to well permitting. Some rely on the County for some or all permits, and others do it themselves. Once the update is complete, we will update our agreements with the cities.





Chapter 7.71 – Water Systems

Chapter 7.73 – Individual Water Systems

PROCESS



1. Data Collection and Process Review
2. Prepare draft Well Ordinance Update Recommendations Table
3. Engage Water Advisory Commission for review and approval
4. Engage Technical Advisory Committee for challenging issues
5. Engage key partners for review and revisions
6. Provide conceptual/draft updated Well Ordinance to BOS for review and approval (Fall 2024)
7. Complete CEQA/environmental review
8. Public hearing at the Planning Commission for their recommendation on the draft Ordinance (Local Coastal Program [LCP] Amendment)
Coordinate with Planning
9. The BOS would consider the recommendation and adopt the ordinance.
10. The adopted ordinance would be submitted to the Coastal Commission for certification.
11. Distribute to GSAs, cities, local jurisdictions and develop formal agreements if needed

PROCESS -
TAC

Disadvantaged Community

Small farmers

Santa Cruz Farm Bureau and/or Working
lands/Agriculture

Well Driller

Well Driller

Water Advisory Commission

Water Advisory Commission

Groundwater Sustainability Agencies

PV Water

Biotic resources -NMFS

Biotic resources -CDFW

Public utilities/Soquel Creek

State Water Resources Control Board

Department of Water Resources



Well Permit Type	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
DESTRUCTION, WELL	16	18	21	23	19	15	12	16	23	4
NEW WELL CONSTRUCTION	24	30	32	24	30	22	16	26	30	19
REPLACEMENT WELL CONSTRUCT.	6	14	12	7	7	12	7	7	5	3
SUPPLEMENTAL WELL CONSTRUCT.	22	20	16	16	20	27	20	17	13	10

Meeting Number	Meeting Topics
Meeting 1	1) Introductions, groundrules, goal, expectations. 2) Intro to well ordinance, review reasons for update, 3) buy-in on staff proposing language (for some/all of the areas of change), 4) pulling out topics for additional discussion.
Meeting 2	Focused meeting on groundwater: 1) SGMA/GSAs/GSPs 2) GW emergencies 3) Metering 4) Impacts to surrounding wells 5) Areas of declining GW
Meeting 3	Public Trust Value Protections: 1) Identify where wells may impact Public Trust values (fish and seawater intrusion) 2) Review existing protections 3) Determine when additional evaluation and/or protections are needed
Meeting 4	Draft language and review of impacts of the proposal to staffing, permit turn around time, and fees.
Public Workshop	
Meeting 5	Review Final language, recommend the WAC review at their next meeting.
Optional Meeting 6	Final review after changes from Planning Commission, Coastal Commission, Board of Sups

Discussion

