

Urban Water Management Planning Act and Senate Bills 610 and 221

Senate Bills (SB) 610 and SB 221 are companion measures designed to improve coordination and collaborative planning between cities, counties and water suppliers. Both laws require authorities to demonstrate that adequate and reliable 20-year water supplies are available for any new development as well as existing water users. Urban Water Management Plans can provide the basis for those water assessments.

SB610 requires the preparation of Urban Water Management Plans and water supply assessments for larger development projects or land use plans that are subject to the California Environmental Quality Act process. SB 221 covers approvals of subdivision maps with more than 500 units. SB221 prohibits a land use agency from approving a subdivision map of more than 500 units without a letter of verification that sufficient and reliable water is available.

SB 610 and 221 significantly elevated the planning function of UWMPs by creating water supply assessments and verification requirements. SB 610 and SB 221 amended state law, effective January 1, 2002, to improve the link between information on water supply availability and certain land use decisions made by cities and counties. The State statutes dictate information requirements and procedural requirements for land use and water supply agencies to follow when making discretionary decisions and approving projects. They also increase the burden of proof for documenting findings related to water supplies.

The changes in the Water Code also require verification of sufficient water supplies as a condition of approval for development; compel urban water suppliers to provide more information on reliability; and require average and drought year conditions be addressed. Additional requirements to address groundwater sources were added. A supplier relying on groundwater to meet its customers' demands must provide detailed information regarding the limitations of that source, and to the extent available, the historical uses of the basin.

Links

[SB 610 Water Supply Planning \(Costa 2001\)](#)

[SB 221 Land Use: Water Supplies \(Kuehl 2001\)](#)