



**POSITION
of the
WESTERN STATES WATER COUNCIL
on
PROTECTING GROUNDWATER QUALITY**

**Anchorage, Alaska
September 14, 2023**

WHEREAS, groundwater is a critically important natural resource, especially in the mostly arid West; and

WHEREAS, groundwater management – the protection of its quality and its orderly, rational allocation and withdrawal for beneficial use – requires cooperation among all levels of government; and

WHEREAS, states recognize the importance and role of comprehensive groundwater planning in overall water management; and

WHEREAS, the federal government has a longstanding policy of deferring to the states to develop and implement groundwater management and protection programs; and

WHEREAS, most western states have legal systems to allocate groundwater rights and further have the responsibility for groundwater quality protection; and

WHEREAS, the regulatory reach of the Clean Water Act was not intended and should not be applied to the management and protection of groundwater resources contravening state water law, policies and programs; and

WHEREAS, nothing stated in this position is intended to apply to the interpretation or application of any interstate compact;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that any federal groundwater quality strategy must recognize and respect state primacy, reflect a true state-federal partnership, and provide adequate funding consistent with current federal statutory authorities and regulatory mandates.

Originally adopted March 14, 1997

Revised and Reaffirmed:

*Mar 14, 2000, Mar 21, 2003, Mar 29, 2006, Oct 17, 2008, Oct 7, 2011,
Oct 10, 2014, and Oct 20, 2017, Oct. 15, 2020*

(See also Nos. 215, 230, 249, 274, 309, 337, 377, and 414, 456)