

POSITION
of the
WESTERN STATES WATER COUNCIL
on
PROTECTING GROUND WATER QUALITY
Idaho Falls, Idaho
October 7, 2011
(revised and reaffirmed)

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

WHEREAS, ground water 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 ground water planning in overall water management; and

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

WHEREAS, most western states have legal systems to allocate ground water rights and further have the responsibility for ground water 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 ground water resources contravening state water law, policies and programs;

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

*(See also Nos. 215, 230, 249, 274, and 309
originally adopted March 14, 1997
revised and reaffirmed Mar 14, 2000, Mar 21, 2003, Mar 29, 2006, and October 17, 2008*