

# UPDATE on a “Ground Heat Exchange Well” Standard

(Producing an update of the never-finalized DWR draft standards of 1999)

Posted: 4/6/21

Good day,

I have asked Bill Martin to put this information out to the membership so that they may be informed as to what is happening in the State of California with respect to Ground Heat Exchange Well (GHEW) Standards. Yes, we can argue about the nomenclature that has been assigned to our technology but it is codified in the California Water Code - so that is a battle for another day.

In February of this year, the DWR embarked on a well-thought out, organized, and now well-funded effort to revise four of California’s Well Standards: water, monitoring, cathodic protection, and **ground heat exchange wells**. They have hired a consultant to facilitate the discussions and separate technical consultant to work with them to update the Standards. DWR is seeking to create a document that will have a ‘long shelf life’ because the opportunity to fund these activities are not always regular or sufficient.

The last time the Department of Water Resources (DWR) worked on revising the GHEW Standards was in 2013-2014 in response to AB 2339, which this association worked together with colleagues across the nation, to pass in the State legislature.

Unfortunately, the requirement to put a Standard in place (recall the 1999 Standard was never adopted) was not funded with the bill and so the effort was soon put down low on the priority list by DWR who was focused on the drought of the time and then the Oroville Dam.

The Technical Advisory Committee consists of 9 focus groups divided into two phases. Phase 1 kicked off in March and includes five different focus groups of topical specialty with representation across the board from drillers and consultants to manufacturers and regulators from California and other states. The five Phase 1 focus groups are as follows and I have noted some topics that are of specific interest to many CalGeo members:

## **Sealing Materials and Placement**

- Grouting materials
- Radial thickness of a seal

## **Water Well Siting**

- Depth of Annual surface seal (for vertical ground loops it is full depth, but this can also be the ‘concrete cap’ referenced for water wells)
- Setbacks

## Large Diameter Infiltration/Recharge Wells

### Non-Vertical Wells

#### Destruction

We are grateful that Allan Skouby of GeoPro is serving on the *Sealing Materials and Placement Focus Group*. His knowledge of grouting materials, HDPE pipe, and the industry is extensive and he has our best interests at heart.

In 2022, DWR will kick off the Phase 2 which will be more specific to the well types identified above.

CalGeo Board member Joe Parsons of ClimateMaster is serving on the *Ground Heat Exchange Well Focus Group*, as well as Mark Metzner CalGeo member & Vice Chair, ANSI/ CSA / IGSHPA C448 Bi-National Standard, Allan Skouby, and yours truly. We will do our best to represent the CalGeo members and the industry at large.

At this time there are no pressing topics to solicit input from the membership on - but know that the request for help could be coming in the near future. I will provide updates as information is available.

I look forward to seeing you all at *The Underground!*

Lisa Meline, PE

Life Member, California Geothermal Heat Pump Association



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