

Bill Summary
1st Session of the 60th Legislature

Bill No.:	SB 259
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Request No.	328
Author:	Sen. Howard
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Bill Analysis

SB 259 requires water permit holders to remit their annual report of water use to the Water Resources Board no later than January 31 of the year following the permitted use. The measure specifies that conservation, nonuse, and usage practices resulting in less consumption of the permitted water shall not be used to diminish the permit holder's future permitted equal proportional share. The measure establishes penalties and fines for any person willfully withholding the annual report. The measure also provides that complaints relating to unauthorized use of water shall be submitted to the Board and the local groundwater irrigation district.

The measure also directs the Board to require all water wells requiring a permit to take and use groundwater to utilize water well flow meters or alternative measuring systems. The Board shall promulgate rules providing for an 8-year phase-in schedule of adopting these systems. The Board shall also modernize its data collection, investigate claims of waste, and impose fines and penalties for overuse or waste. A 5-year allocation of the maximum annual yield of the basin or subbasin may be approved for a regular permit beginning August 1, 2026. Applicants for such allocations must adhere to the cumulative maximum annual yield for the basin or subbasin over the period.

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