Partial Revision of the Basic Plan on Water Cycle

The secretariat of the Headquarters for Water-Cycle Policy, Cabinet Secretariat
Background (Amendment of the Basic Act on Water Cycle)

Challenges facing local public agencies

1. Clarifying the behavior of groundwater and understanding the water balance—which are fundamental factors to consider when establishing or strengthening restrictions—are difficult.
2. Even when local public agencies want to establish a groundwater council for consensus building or to enact or revise an ordinance, they lack the necessary information and know-how, which hinders consensus building and rulemaking in the community.

<Main amendment points>

- **Establishment of regulations concerning responsibilities**
  Clarification that “measures for proper groundwater preservation and use” are included in the responsibilities of the national and local public agencies, and that cooperation with those measures is a responsibility of businesses and the public.

- **Addition of stipulations concerning the “proper groundwater preservation and use” in basic measures**
  Addition of stipulations requiring the national government and local public agencies to make efforts to implement the following measures (1) to (3) and other necessary measures to promote groundwater management*
  (1) Collection, organization, analysis, announcement, and preservation of information concerning groundwater
  (2) Establishment of councils concerning groundwater preservation and use
  (3) Restrictions on extraction of groundwater

*Efforts to ascertain, analyze, and visualize the actual states of groundwater use and behavior, and to form and implement agreements in the community with respect to the preservation of water volumes and water quality, recharge, extraction, and other factors.
Partial Revision of the Basic Plan on Water Cycle (Main Points and Outline)

Main Revisions

- The revision is a partial revision taking effect within the period of the current plan (2020-2024).
- It establishes and arranges items for groundwater-related matters contained in the current plan in line with the intent of the Basic Act on Water Cycle’s June 2021 amendment and presents them as a comprehensive plan for groundwater.
- It also includes information on initiatives that have progressed following the current plan’s formulation.

Revision Outline

Introduction and Part 1 (Basic policies)
- Additions and revisions to groundwater-related notations in relevant sections.
- Positioning of “proper groundwater preservation and use” as a priority within river basin management to further promote groundwater management.

Part 2 (Water-cycle-related measures to be taken comprehensively and systematically by the Japanese government)
- Establishment of “Proper groundwater preservation and use” as a new item.
- Description of measures in line with the Act’s provisions.

Part 3 (What is needed to promote water-cycle-related measures comprehensively and systematically)
- Additions and revisions to the descriptions of responsibilities of the national government, local public agencies, businesses, and members of the public based on the amended Act.

Progress made by actions following the current plan’s formulation (renewable energy and river basin flood control)
- Addition/revision of notations concerning the following actions that progressed since the Basic Plan on Water Cycle’s previous revision:
  1. Promotion of the introduction of renewable energy in water cycle policies based on Japan’s aim to achieve net-zero GHG emissions by 2050
  2. Promotion of initiatives based on the full enforcement of the Acts related to Disaster Resilience and Sustainability by All (November 2021)

The composition of “proper groundwater preservation and use”
- Introduction → Establishment of a groundwater management promotion platform, etc.
- (1) Collection, organization, analysis, announcement, and preservation of information concerning groundwater → Development of a groundwater database, etc.
- (2) Use of councils, etc., concerning proper groundwater preservation and use
- (3) Restrictions on extraction of groundwater and other necessary measures
Partial Revision of the Basic Plan on Water Cycle: Main Content

1. Main initiatives for further promoting groundwater management (actions newly incorporated into the plan)

- **Development, publication, and application of a groundwater database**
  - Users (Administrative/general)
    - Data accumulation/retrieval
    - Uploaded on XLS/CSV
  - Users (Administrative/general)
    - Observation/collection
    - Uploaded on XLS/CSV
  - Data accumulation/retrieval
  - Application of data

- **Establishment and operation of a groundwater management promotion platform**
  - Groundwater management promotion platform
    - Accumulation of know-how for ordinance development, groundwater analysis, etc.
  - Establishment of portal site
  - Creation of advisor system
  - Public awareness through seminars

2. Main details of revisions on initiatives in progress

- **Support the ascertainment of groundwater status and issues in each region and encourage local groundwater management efforts.**
  - Promotion of research on clarification of the actual groundwater status through the use of emergency groundwater usage systems and other means
  - Mutual cooperation with parties concerned with land use, etc., in the operation of the groundwater councils
  - Provision information effective in the preparation of ordinances
  - Publicity/awareness raising concerning groundwater
  - Promotion of initiatives to reduce nitrogen burdens in areas where groundwater contamination by nitrate nitrogen, etc., has occurred
  - Promotion of use of geothermal heat (use of groundwater heat) that contributes to decarbonization, etc.

- **Resolutions concerning the proposed partial amendment of the Basic Act on the Water Cycle**
  - Promote the development of a groundwater database for the consolidation and mutual use of observation data from local public agencies to promote groundwater management.
  - Provide necessary advice and other support to local public agencies for the preparation of ordinances, etc.