



Ground water authority NOC mandatory for all FBOs seeking FSSAI licence

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Ashwani Maindola, New Delhi

FBOs seeking FSSAI licence for operations will now have to obtain mandatory NOC from Central Ground Water Authority (CGWA). The move is likely to help overcome the alarming ground water depletion in the country.

In a notice, the country's apex food regulator has said that it will not consider any request for licences to new industries extracting ground water located in 1,034 overexploited areas (162 notified plus 872 to be notified) without NOC (No Objection Certificate) from CGWA.

In case of existing industries seeking renewals or product modifications in these areas, FSSAI (Food Safety and Standards Authority of India) shall consider applications seeking renewals or product modifications within the existing capacity only.

Besides FSSAI, in case of applicant industries extracting ground water located in 882 overexploited areas, other than 162 notified thus far seeking FSSAI licences for renewals or product modifications, may consider the applications subject to the acceptance of their application for a NOC by CGWA and meeting other eligibility criteria. However, FSSAI will consider applications seeking issue of new licences, renewals of existing licences and product modifications without insisting on an NOC from CGWA in case of applicant industries extracting ground water located in safe, semi-critical, or critical areas.

The notice also said that in the states where there were legislations for ground water extraction, the NOCs of the state governments shall be deemed final in the case.

These states include Andhra Pradesh, Goa, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Karnataka, Kerala, the National Capital Territory (NCT) of Delhi, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, West Bengal, Chandigarh, Puducherry and Lakshdweep.

It is pertinent to mention here that ground water extraction has been a bone of

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contention between the beverage industry and activists.

In many parts of the country, reports of agitation against such operations have surfaced. Many beverage plants extracting water were shut in the past few years in many places in the country. These include Hapur near Delhi, Jaipur in Rajasthan, Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh, amongst others.

When contacted, the Indian Beverage Association did not comment.

Meanwhile, activists have opined that the restrictions on ground water extraction should be stricter.

Prabhakar, chairman, Federation of Consumer Organisation Tamilnadu and Pondicherry (FEDCOT), said, "This notice will not have much impact on the operations of beverage companies." That is because CGWA has left out some places, which were critical in terms of ground water availability, he rued.

"First of all, many places are not covered in list. For instance, in Pidathi (Karnataka) and Tiruvallur and Gangaikondan (Tamil Nadu), crores of litres of water are sucked from the ground every day by corporate giants," Prabhakar said. "These are overexploited areas which are not seen in the list. FSSAI's notification will not make any impact in the beverage industry," he added.

Categorisation of blocks/mandals/taluks in India (2013)

Serial Number	States/Union Territories	Total number of Assessment units	Safe		Semi-critical		Critical		Overexploited		Saline	
			Numbers	%	Numbers	%	Numbers	%	Numbers	%	Numbers	%
States												
1	Andhra Pradesh	670	497	74	54	8	17	3	61	9	41	6
2	Arunachal Pradesh	11	11	100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3	Assam	27	27	100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4	Bihar	534	520	97	14	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
5	Chhattisgarh	146	125	85	18	1	2	1	1	1	0	0

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6	Delhi	27	5	19	7	26	0	0	15	56	0	0
7	Goa	12	12	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
8	Gujarat	223	175	78	9	46	3	23	10	10	4	
9	Haryana	119	30	25	11	9	14	12	64	54	0	0
10	Himachal Pradesh	8	6	75	0	0	1	13	1	3	0	0
11	Jammu and Kashmir	22	22	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
12	Jharkhand	260	244	94	10	42	1	4	2	0	0	
13	Karnataka	176	98	56	21	12	14	8	43	24	0	0
14	Kerala	152	131	86	18	12	2	1	1	1	0	0
15	Madhya Pradesh	313	228	73	58	9	2	1	25	8	0	0
16	Maharashtra	353	324	92	19	5	1	0	9	3	0	0
17	Manipur	9	9	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
18	Meghalaya	11	11	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
19	Mizoram	22	22	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
20	Nagaland	11	11	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
21	Odisha	314	308	98	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	2
22	Punjab	138	26	19	3	2	4	3	105	76	0	0
23	Rajasthan	248	44	18	28	1	9	4	164	66	3	1

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24	Sikkim	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
25	Tamil Nadu	1,139	429	38	212	19	105	9	358	31	35	3
26	Telangana	443	311	70	74	17	12	3	46	10	0	0
27	Tripura	39	39	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
28	Uttar Pradesh	820	603	74	45	55	59	7	113	14	0	0
29	Uttarakhand	18	16	89	1	6	1	6	0	0	0	0
30	West Bengal	268	191	71	76	28	1	0	0	0	0	0
	Total States	6,533	4,475	68	678	0	252	4	1,033	16	95	1
	Union Territories											
1	Andaman and Nicobar Islands	34	34	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2	Chandigarh	1	1	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3	Dadra and Nagar Haveli	1	1	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4	Daman and Diu	2	1	50	0	0	1	5	0	0	0	0
5	Lakshdweep	9	6	67	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
6	Puducherry	4	2	50	0	0	0	0	1	25	1	25
	Total Union Territories	51	45	88	3	6	1	2	1	2	1	2
	Grand Total	6,584	4,520	69	681	0	253	4	1,034	16	96	1

Blocks: Bihar, Chattisgarh, Haryana, Jharkhand, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Manipur, Mizoram, Odisha, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tripura, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand and West Bengal

Taluks: Karnataka, Goa, Gujarat and Maharashtra

Mandals: Andhra Pradesh and Telangana

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Districts (Valley): Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Nagaland

Islands: Lakshdweep and Andaman and Nicobar Islands

Firka: Tamil Nadu

Region: Puducherry

UT: Chandigarh, Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Daman and Diu

Tehsil: Delhi