

MANDATORY CONSERVATION
ACHIEVING A 25% STATEWIDE REDUCTION IN POTABLE URBAN WATER USE
FACT SHEET

Background

With California facing one of the most severe droughts on record, Governor Brown declared a drought State of Emergency in January 2014. Since that time, the Governor has issued three additional Executive Orders directing actions to prepare for water shortages. For the first time in state history, the Governor, in his April 1, 2015 Executive Order, directed the State Water Board to implement mandatory water reductions in cities and towns across California to reduce potable urban water usage by 25 percent statewide. This savings amounts to approximately 1.3 million acre-feet of water over the next nine months, or nearly as much water as is currently in Lake Oroville. To achieve these savings, the State Water Board is expediting emergency regulations to set usage targets for communities around the State.

Applicability

The mandatory water reductions, along with specific restrictions on commercial, industrial and institutional irrigation uses, apply to urban water suppliers as defined in water code section 10617, excluding wholesalers. Generally, urban water suppliers serve more than 3,000 customers or deliver more than 3,000 acre feet of water per year. Suppliers regulated by the Public Utilities Commission are included in the mandatory water restrictions. The Executive Order requests that the Public Utilities Commission require investor-owned water utilities to implement reductions consistent with the State Water Board requirements for all other urban water suppliers. The specific restrictions and prohibitions on water use in the Executive Order apply to all Californians and are in addition to the specific restrictions and prohibitions contained in the emergency conservation regulation approved by the Office of Administrative Law (OAL) on March 27, 2015.

Proposed Schedule

The State Water Board is expediting the development and adoption of additional regulations to implement the new restrictions and prohibitions contained in the Executive Order. There will be several opportunities for stakeholder involvement prior to the release of the formal notice of emergency rulemaking. The first opportunity follows the release of a Proposed Regulatory Framework and the second will follow the release of draft a regulation, as follows:

- Governor issues Drought Executive Order **April 1, 2015**
- Notice announcing release of draft regulatory framework and request for public comment **April 7, 2015**
- Notice announcing release of draft regulation for informal public comment **April 17, 2015**
- Emergency rulemaking formal notice **April 28, 2015**
- Board hearing and adoption **May 5 or 6, 2015**

Content of Emergency Rulemaking Package

This rulemaking package will address the following provisions of the April 1, 2015 Executive Order:

- Ordering Provision 2: Mandatory 25% reduction in potable urban water use;
- Ordering Provision 5: Commercial, industrial and institutional potable water use reductions;
- Ordering Provision 6: Prohibition on using potable water for irrigation of ornamental turf in street medians; and
- Ordering Provision 7: Prohibition on using potable water for irrigation outside of new home construction without drip or micro-spray systems.

Rate structures and other pricing mechanisms, which are very important tools for reducing water use, will be taken up in the coming weeks as required by Ordering Provision 8.

How You Can Help

To meet a mid-May to June 1 timeline for implementation of the emergency regulation, interested persons and organizations will be requested to provide input within one week of a document's release. To assist the Board in most thoughtfully addressing this dire situation, please consider the following general questions as you prepare your comments:

1. Are there other approaches to achieve a 25% statewide reduction in potable urban water use that would also impose a greater responsibility on water suppliers with higher per capita water use than those that use less?
2. How should the regulation differentiate between tiers of high, medium and low per capita water users?
3. Should water suppliers disclose their list of actions to achieve the required water reductions?
4. Should these actions detail specific plans for potable water use reductions in the commercial, industrial, and institutional (CII) sectors?
5. Should additional information be required in the monthly conservation reports for urban water suppliers to demonstrate progress towards achieving the required water reductions?
6. How and when should compliance with the required water reductions be assessed?
7. What enforcement response should be considered if water suppliers fail to achieve their required water use reductions?

How to Provide Input

Information including discussion drafts, draft regulations and related materials will be available on the State Water Board's website at:

http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/waterrights/water_issues/programs/drought/emergency_mandatory_regulations.shtml . Clear and concise written comment and questions can be sent to Jessica Bean at jessica.bean@waterboards.ca.gov.