

**STATE WATER RESOURCES CONTROL BOARD
BOARD MEETING SESSION – OFFICE OF RESEARCH PLANNING AND PERFORMANCE
JUNE 17, 2014**

ITEM 10

SUBJECT

UPDATE FROM URBAN WATER SUPPLIERS ON ACTIONS TO REDUCE WATER USAGE

DISCUSSION

On January 17, 2014, Governor Brown declared a State of Emergency due to unprecedented drought conditions. Over the past several months, the State Water Resources Control Board (Water Board) and other state agencies have been assisting communities and businesses affected by the drought. On April 25, 2014, Governor Brown issued an [Executive Order](#) calling on the State to redouble state drought actions. Among other things, the Executive Order provides that:

“The Water Board shall direct urban water suppliers that are not already implementing drought response plans to limit outdoor irrigation and other wasteful water practices such as those identified in this Executive Order. The Water Board will request by June 15 an update from urban water agencies on their actions to reduce water usage and the effectiveness of these efforts. The Water Board is directed to adopt emergency regulations as it deems necessary, pursuant to Water Code section 1058.5, to implement this directive.”

On May 23, 2014, the Water Board issued a survey on water conservation actions to all urban water suppliers that submit Urban Water Management Plans (suppliers with over 3,000 service connections). In developing the survey, Water Board staff consulted with representatives from the Department of Water Resources, the Department of Public Health, the Association of California Water Agencies, the California Urban Water Agencies, and the California Urban Water Conservation Council. The survey questions can be accessed here: <http://www.research.net/s/suppliersurveyJune2014>.

As of June 6, over 50% of the urban water suppliers surveyed had responded (220 responded out of 420 surveyed). Initial Survey results indicate that water suppliers are taking a variety of conservation actions in response to the drought, but that in some areas water use has not declined from water use levels over the past three years. Over 90% of the respondents indicated they have a drought/water shortage contingency plan and about 56% have now invoked those plans. Additional details regarding the survey results will be presented at the Board Meeting on June 17th.

Some Southern California water suppliers who responded to the survey declined to present water production data because they believe comparing 2011-2013 water production to 2014 is not reflective of their conservation efforts because 2011 was a wet year and wholesale water deliveries were being allocated by the Metropolitan Water District during this time. Additionally, poor economic conditions persisted during 2011 and 2012. Accordingly, these factors may have led to decreased water production during 2011-2013. Over 50% of suppliers provided supplemental information in comments to survey questions. These comments provide important context that will be discussed as part of the staff presentation at the Board Meeting.

The Governor's April 25, 2014, Executive Order directed the State Water Board to adopt emergency regulations as it deems necessary to implement the Executive Order. Emergency regulations could focus on residential irrigation practices; use of water for washing vehicles, hosing down streets and driveways; outdoor water use at recreational and industrial sites, and data collection, among others.

On June 17, 2014, the State Water Board will be hearing from agencies and stakeholders on water conservation actions being taken throughout the state and on the results of the recent the survey of urban water suppliers. The State Water Board is interested in receiving stakeholder input on: 1) whether the actions being taken by urban water agencies are effective in reducing water usage, 2) if the Board should adopt emergency regulations to require certain actions, and 3) what those actions would be.

POLICY ISSUE

None at this time. The Board will consider the information presented and provide direction for next steps.

FISCAL IMPACT

This is an informational item only. There is a minor impact to urban water suppliers for submission of the data requested in the online survey to the Board.

REGIONAL BOARD IMPACT

No impact at this time.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

The State Water Board should evaluate the information presented and consider whether additional information on water conservation actions, water use, and water rates is needed to inform next steps.