



SWEETWATER AUTHORITY

505 GARRETT AVENUE
POST OFFICE BOX 2328
CHULA VISTA, CALIFORNIA 91912-2328
(619) 420-1413
FAX (619) 425-7469
<http://www.sweetwater.org>

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May 16, 2016

Jeanine Townsend, Clerk to the Board
State Water Resources Control Board
1001 I Street, 24th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

Subject: May 18, 2016 BOARD MEETING (Conservation Extended Emergency Regulation) - Comment Letter

Dear Ms. Townsend:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments to the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) regarding the proposed Conservation Extended Emergency Regulation (Extended Regulation) to be discussed at the May 18, 2016 State Water Board meeting. The proposed framework provides a positive response to those water agencies that have made long-term investments in local water supply with the goal of addressing water shortages and reducing reliance on imported water supplies. With that in mind, Sweetwater Authority (Authority) offers the following comments:

- 1. Support for Proposed Approach** – The Authority supports the proposed supply-based self-certification approach, which accounts for each urban water supplier's unique supply conditions and reflects actual shortages projected within a supplier's service area. The Authority appreciates the willingness of the State Water Board to incorporate previous recommendations from the water community into the Extended Regulation and make this process as open and inclusive as practical. The Authority also appreciates the State Water Board's willingness to replace state-developed standards, with the opportunity for urban water suppliers to locally determine conservation standards based upon each agency's specific circumstances. By taking into account actual conditions, the proposed approach accounts for substantial investments in reliable drought-resilient local supplies, customer conservation education, and incentive programs.
- 2. Recommend Additional Time to Submit Information** – The Authority recommends that the State Water Board allow an additional week for compliance with the self-certification requirements by extending the deadline for wholesale

*A Public Water Agency
Serving National City, Chula Vista and Surrounding Areas*

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agencies to June 15, and the deadline for urban water suppliers to June 22. This allows time for wholesale and retail agencies to ensure that their calculations are quality-assured. This is particularly necessary where multiple levels of wholesale suppliers need to coordinate based on complex water supply relationships.

3. **Recommend A Wholesaler Aggregate Supply Reporting Option** – The Authority recommends the inclusion of an option that would allow wholesalers to evaluate the sufficiency of available aggregate supplies to meet the aggregate demands of the urban water suppliers they serve. Assuming a wholesale water agency can demonstrate regional supply sufficiency, no additional analysis would be needed by its retail water agencies for their self-certification reporting. This would offer a more streamlined reporting option.
4. **Recommend Incorporation of 2015 Demands** – The Authority recommends three-years (2013-2015) be used to establish average baseline potable water demands. Including 2015 in the calculation of an average baseline demand is more representative of actual and future projected demands than only using 2013 and 2014. It is still a very conservative analysis that incorporates demand from 2013, before the Governor declared a statewide drought. This three-year period better reflects likely water user demand in the face of continued drought conditions, as currently communicated by water suppliers, the state, and the media.
5. **Do Not Support Setting a Minimum Conservation Standard or Floor** – The Authority does not support the establishment of a minimum conservation standard. The proposed approach requires agencies to quantitatively demonstrate that there is sufficient supply to meet demand in the face of a continued drought. A conservation floor would be arbitrary and would undermine the purpose and integrity of the self-certification analysis. A minimum conservation standard also creates a disincentive to future investments in reliable supply development, and would continue to discount the value of local investments that support local drought supply reliability. Monthly reporting provides sufficient opportunity to evaluate the success of the self-certification process over time.

Adopting a Statewide drought response protocol that allows urban water agencies to continue to utilize local/regional resources, encourages regional coordination and investment in additional drought tolerant water supply development, and continues to promote efficient water use practices is highly recommended. The proposed Conservation Extended Emergency Regulation seems to do this.

It should be noted that the Authority has promoted efficient water use by customers for decades, and expects our customers will continue to maintain low water demand levels in the coming months. The Authority also supports future collaboration with the State Water Board and Department of Water Resources on the Governor's May 9, 2016

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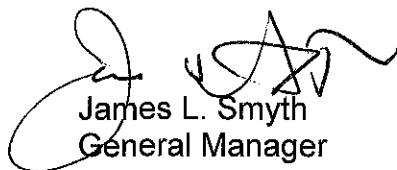
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Executive Order, regarding long-term water use efficiency. Urban Water Management Plans (UWMP) are important long term planning documents that require significant time and energy to develop. UWMP and their associated Drought Response/Shortage Contingency Plans include well-established mechanisms that allow urban water suppliers, such as the Authority, to move in and out of drought conditions in a planned and orderly manner based on local water supply conditions. The Authority (like many other urban water suppliers) is in the process of finalizing our 2015 UWMP for submittal to the Department of Water Resources (DWR) by the July 1, 2016 deadline. The Authority recommends that any new state requirements be incorporated into regularly scheduled updates of these plans.

In summary, the Authority recognizes the challenging job facing the State Water Board and appreciates its efforts. Please carefully consider the Authority's comments and other letters and comments you may receive from other retail water agencies who are closest to water consumers.

Sincerely,



James L. Smyth
General Manager