



Media Release

State Water Board Reaches Agreement with Coachella Valley Water District to Further Conservation Efforts

Penalty for Failing to Meet Water Conservation Standard to be suspended

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SACRAMENTO – The State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board), in its continued effort to focus on water conservation as opposed to financial penalties, has entered into a settlement agreement with the Coachella Valley Water District (Water District) to promote water efficiency.

The Water District is alleged to have failed to meet its mandated water conservation standard, and was assessed a \$61,000 administrative civil liability in the [fall of 2015](#). The Water District has agreed, in lieu of paying the civil liability, to create a Landscaper Certification Program that promotes best water use practices. With the successful completion of this Supplemental Environmental Project within one year at an estimated cost of \$83,400, the \$61,000 civil liability will be suspended. The Water District will continue to invest in the program for five years.

“The Office of Enforcement’s focus has always been on finding innovative and sustaining solutions to meet the goals of water conservation – not issuing fines,” said Cris Carrigan, director of the State Water Board’s Office of Enforcement. “This agreement is the second we have reached with water suppliers that were originally issued civil liabilities for not meeting their water conservation standards. What we have here is another program that will bring real, tangible benefits of water conservation and resiliency, as opposed to just a monetary penalty. A key advantage of this approach is that funds that would have gone to pay the civil liability will be kept locally and benefit water conservation in the Coachella Valley community.”

Previously, the State Water Board reached an agreement with the Indio Water Authority to create a water conservation program in place of the \$61,000 administrative civil liability for missing its mandated water conservation standard. The city of Beverly Hills paid its penalty of \$61,000, and the State Water Board is currently working with the city of Redlands over its administrative civil liability related to not meeting mandated water conservation standards.



This Supplemental Environmental Project, as laid out in the settlement agreement, will focus on teaching professional landscapers the best practices for achieving water efficiency when creating outdoor environments. This certification course will be required for any new or existing professionals seeking a landscaping business license in any city or county in the Coachella Valley. The Water District will create the curriculum, partner with a local community college to host the program and work with cities and counties throughout the Coachella Valley to implement the certification criteria into landscaping business licenses.

The Water District will measure success of the Landscaper Certification Program in two ways:

1. Determining the number of cities that have implemented ordinances requiring landscapers to be certified before renewing or seeking a new landscaping business license, and
2. Evaluating the number of participants in the Landscaper Certification Program.

“CVWD (Coachella Valley Water District) appreciates the State Water Board’s support of this project and willingness to allow us to spend the funds in a way that benefits the Coachella Valley,” said CVWD General Manager Jim Barrett. “We expect this certification program will become a valuable resource for professional landscapers to help their clients become more water wise.”

For more information on the settlement agreement and the Supplemental Environmental Project, see the Office of Enforcement [webpage](#).

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