



Media Release

State Water Board releases draft emergency water conservation regulation

Regulations would boost water savings starting in June

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SACRAMENTO – With intensifying drought causing the driest first quarter of the year in a century, the State Water Resources Control Board released an [updated proposed emergency water conservation regulation today](#) in response to the water conservation directives in Governor Newsom’s March 28 Executive Order. If the proposed regulation is adopted by the board on May 24, it would contribute to water savings starting in June.

“We know there is untapped potential for greater water savings across the state,” said Eileen Sobeck, executive director of the State Water Board. “Conservation is the quickest and least expensive way to stretch water supplies. This regulation empowers water systems and local authorities to respond more forcefully to the impacts of drought. There is no time for complacency; the severity of this new normal makes it imperative that all Californians save water in every way we can.”

Recently, many large water suppliers have imposed strong new restrictions on customers’ water use in accordance with their drought management plans. The proposed regulation would require suppliers to implement conservation actions under Level 2 of their Water Shortage Contingency Plans, appropriate for water shortages of up to 20 percent. The proposed regulation does not prevent suppliers from taking additional actions. About half of the state’s water supplies have not yet activated this level.

These “Level 2” actions often include things such as:

- Increasing communication about the importance of water conservation
- Limiting outdoor irrigation to certain days or hours
- Increasing patrolling to identify water waste
- Enforcing water use prohibitions

The regulation would also ban irrigation of lawns not used for recreation or other community purposes, such as grass in front of or next to large industrial or commercial buildings. This water use can be cut back without significant impacts to most households or economic activities. The regulation would not ban the irrigation of



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residential lawns, community spaces, or sports fields and other turf spaces used for recreation or events. It also would not ban the irrigation of trees or other non-turf plantings.

The proposed regulation would give suppliers new options to reduce water waste if they choose to use them. A violation of the non-functional turf irrigation provision, for example, would be an infraction and subject to a fine of up to \$500. People who see water waste should report it at savewater.ca.gov.

The State Water Board's mission is to preserve, enhance and restore the quality of California's water resources and drinking water for the protection of the environment, public health and all beneficial uses, and to ensure proper allocation and efficient use for present and future generations.