



# Fact Sheet

## **NOTICE OF PROPOSED EMERGENCY REGULATION IMPLEMENTING THE 25% CONSERVATION STANDARD**

On April 1, 2015, Governor Jerry Brown issued the fourth in a series of Executive Orders on actions necessary to address California's severe drought conditions. With snowpack water content at a record low level of 5 percent of average for April 1st, major reservoir storage shrinking each day as a percentage of their daily average measured over the last several decades, and groundwater levels continuing to decline, urgent action is needed. The April 1 Executive Order requires, for the first time in the State's history, mandatory conservation of potable urban water use. Commercial agriculture in many parts of the State has already been notified of severe cutbacks in water supply contracted through the State and Federal Water Projects and is bracing for curtailments of surface water rights in the near-term. Conserving water more seriously now will forestall even more catastrophic impacts if it does not rain next year.

### **Stakeholder Involvement**

To maximize input in a short amount of time, the State Water Board released a proposed regulatory framework for implementing the 25% conservation standard on April 7, 2015 for public input. Over 250 comments were submitted by water suppliers, local government, businesses, individuals, and non-governmental organizations. Draft regulations that considered this input were released on April 18 for informal public comment. Almost 300 comments were received that addressed the methodology for the assignment of conservation standards, the availability of exclusions or adjustments under defined conditions, how to approach the commercial, industrial and institutional (CII) sector, the requirements for smaller water suppliers, and the approach to enforcement. A Notice of Proposed Emergency Regulations, which considers this input and initiates the formal emergency rulemaking process, was released on April 28, 2015. If approved, water savings amounting to approximately 1.3 million acre-feet of water, or nearly as much water as is currently in Lake Oroville, will be realized over the next nine months.

### **What's Next**

The Notice of Proposed Emergency Rulemaking begins a formal comment period that will conclude just prior to the State Water Board's consideration of adoption of the proposed emergency regulation at its May 5-6, 2015 meeting. The formal comment period will conclude on May 4, 2015 at 10:00am. All comments will be immediately provided to the Board Members and posted on the State Water Board's webpage at:

[http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/waterrights/water\\_issues/programs/drought/emergency\\_mandatory\\_regulations.shtml](http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/waterrights/water_issues/programs/drought/emergency_mandatory_regulations.shtml)



During this formal notice period, all **comments must be received by 10:00am on Monday May 4, 2015** and submitted either electronically to: [commentletters@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:commentletters@waterboards.ca.gov) or in writing to the address in the Notice. All comments should indicate on the subject line: "Comment Letter – Emergency Conservation Regulation."

## **Proposed Emergency Regulation - Key Provisions**

### **Conservation Standard for Urban Water Suppliers**

As drought conditions continue, all water suppliers will need to do more to meet the statewide 25% conservation standard. Since the State Water Board adopted its initial emergency urban conservation regulation in July 2014, statewide conservation has reached 9%. Everyone must do more, but the greatest opportunities to meet the statewide 25% conservation standard exist in those areas with higher water use. Often, but not always, these water suppliers are located in areas where the majority of the water use is directed at outdoor irrigation due to lot size, climate and other factors. As temperatures are forecast to climb to above average for the summer months, it will become even more important to take aggressive actions to reduce outdoor water use. The emergency regulation establishes tiers of required water reductions that emphasize the opportunities to reduce outdoor water use.

Many comments spoke to the question of fairness and equity in the construction of the tiers in earlier drafts of the regulation. Concerns were raised about accounting for factors that influence water use, such as past conservation, climate, lot size, density, and income. Ultimately, the tier structure proposed on April 18, 2015 was maintained as the best way to achieve the 25% water reduction called for by the Governor.

*Feedback is specifically requested on whether the conservation framework should be modified to double the number of tiers and use two percent increments instead of four percent. This change would provide further refinement for water suppliers that find themselves on one side or the other of a tier.*

The conservation savings for all urban water suppliers are allocated across nine tiers of increasing levels of residential water use (R-GPCD) to reach the statewide 25 percent reduction mandate. This approach lessens the disparities in reduction requirements between agencies that have similar levels of water consumption, but fall on different sides of dividing lines between tiers. Suppliers have been assigned a conservation standard that ranges between 8% and 36% based on their R-GPCD for the months of July – September, 2014. These three months reflect the amount of water used for summer outdoor irrigation, which provides the greatest opportunity for conservation savings. Some suppliers may be eligible, under specific conditions, for placement into a lower 4% conservation tier. Water suppliers that reduced their water use prior to the drought will have a lower R-GPCD and thus a lower conservation standard than water suppliers with similar climate and density factors where R-GPCD remains high.

Urban water suppliers (serving more than 3,000 customers or delivering more than 3,000 acre feet of water per year and accounting for more than 90% of urban water use) will be assigned a conservation standard, as shown in the following table:

Tier	R-GPCD Range		# of Suppliers in Range	Conservation Standard
	From	To		
1	reserved		0	4%
2	0	64.9	23	8%
3	65	79.9	24	12%
4	80	94.9	44	16%
5	95	109.9	51	20%
6	110	129.9	48	24%
7	130	169.9	82	28%
8	170	214.9	54	32%
9	215	612.0	85	36%

The Smith family of three learns that their water district must reduce water use by 12 percent. A manufacturing plant uses 20 percent of the water and cannot reduce its use. So, residents are told to reduce their use by 15 percent to meet the overall 12 percent target. The Smith family uses an average of 210 gallons per day (or about 70 gallons per person), 165 gallons for indoor use and 45 gallons for watering their small yard. To meet the 15% reduction requirement they must reduce total water use to about 180 gallons per day. This is equivalent to about 60 gallons per person per day.

The Jones family of four learn that their water district must reduce water use by 32 percent. An oil refinery uses 10 percent of the district's water and cannot reduce its use. Their city also has many small businesses, and a golf course, which can reduce use by more than 10 percent. The residents must now reduce their use by 30 percent to meet the overall 32 percent target. The Jones family uses an average of 1,200 gallons per day (or about 300 gallons per person); 300 gallons for indoor use and 900 gallons outdoors, to irrigate a large yard that includes grass and fruit trees. To cut water use by 30 percent, the Jones' must cut their water use by 360 gallons per day to 840 gallons which is equivalent to 210 gallons per person per day.

## Exceptions

The proposed regulation allows water suppliers to request to modify their total water use or be placed into a lower conservation tier under two situations:

1. Urban water suppliers delivering more than 20 percent of their total water production to commercial agriculture may be allowed to modify the amount of water subject to their conservation standard. These suppliers must provide written certification to the Board to be able to subtract the water supplied to commercial agriculture from their total water production for baseline and conservation purposes.
2. Urban water suppliers that have a reserve supply of surface water that could last at least four years may be eligible for placement into lower conservation tier. Only suppliers meeting the eligibility criteria will be considered. These criteria relate to the source(s) of supply, storage capacity, and the number of years that those supplies could last.

*Feedback is specifically requested on whether the regulation should allow water suppliers whose supplies include groundwater to apply for inclusion the 4% reserve tier if it can be demonstrated that they have a minimum of 4 years of supply, do not rely upon imported water, and their groundwater supplies recharge naturally.*

## **Commercial, Industrial and Institutional Sector Clarification**

There are no specific use reduction targets for commercial, industrial, and institutional users served by urban and all other water suppliers. Water suppliers will decide how to meet their conservation standard through reductions from both residential and non-residential users. Water suppliers are encouraged to look at their commercial, institutional and industrial properties that irrigate outdoor ornamental landscapes with potable water for potential conservation savings.

## **Conservation Standard For All Other Water Suppliers**

Smaller water suppliers (serving fewer than 3,000 connections) will be required to achieve a 25% conservation standard or restrict outdoor irrigation to no more than two days per week. These smaller urban suppliers serve less than 10% of Californians.

## **End-User Requirements**

The new prohibitions in the Executive Order apply to all Californians and will take effect immediately upon approval of the regulation by the Office of Administrative Law. These include:

- Irrigation with potable water of ornamental turf on public street medians is prohibited; and
- Irrigation with potable water outside of newly constructed homes and buildings not in accordance with emergency regulations or other requirements established in the California Building Standards Code is prohibited.

These are in addition to the existing restrictions that prohibit:

- Using potable water to wash sidewalks and driveways;
- Allowing runoff when irrigating with potable water;
- Using hoses with no shutoff nozzles to wash cars;
- Using potable water in decorative water features that do not recirculate the water;
- Irrigating outdoors during and within 48 hours following measureable rainfall; and
- Restaurants from serving water to their customers unless the customer requests it.

Additionally, hotels and motels must offer their guests the option to not have their linens and towels laundered daily, and prominently display this option in each guest room.

It will be very important as these provisions are implemented to ensure that existing trees remain healthy and do not present a public safety hazard. Guidance on the implementation of both prohibitions will be developed.

## **Self-Supplied CII**

Commercial, industrial and institutional properties under Provision 5 of the Executive Order with an independent source of water supply (not served by a water supplier), are required under the proposed emergency regulation to either limit outdoor irrigation to two days per week or achieve a 25% reduction in water use. Often, these properties have large landscapes that would otherwise not be addressed by this regulation.

## **New Reporting Requirements**

Total monthly water production and specific reporting on residential use and enforcement as laid out in the previously adopted emergency regulations will remain in effect. Because the conservation standard applies to total water production, the proposed emergency regulation expands the reporting to include information on water use in the commercial, industrial, and institutional sectors. Small water suppliers with fewer than 3,000 service connections will be required to submit a single report on December 15, 2015 that provides their water production from June-November 2015 and June-November 2013 and the number of days per week outdoor irrigation is allowed.

Commercial, industrial, and institutional facilities with an independent source of supply (they are not served by a water supplier) are not required to submit a report; however they should be prepared to demonstrate their compliance with the two day per week watering restriction or the 25% reduction in water use if requested to do so by the Board.

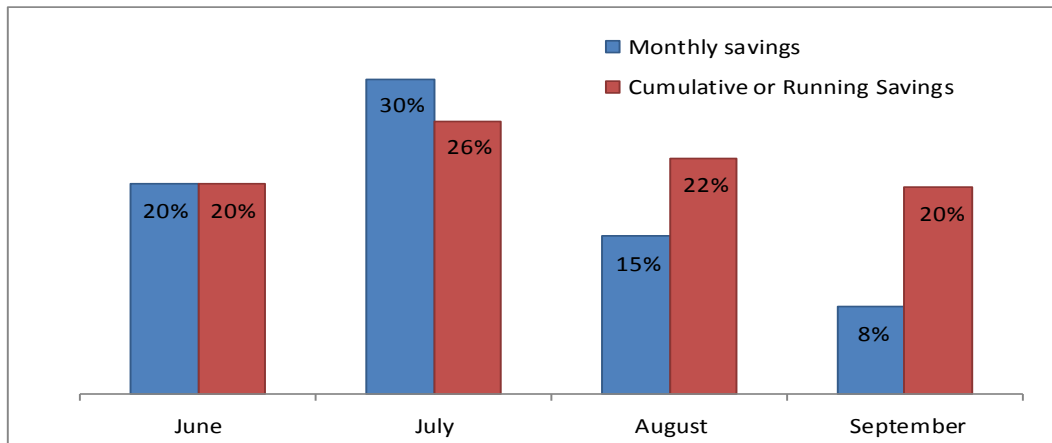
## **Compliance Assessment**

In many communities around the state, over half (and up to 80 percent) of total residential water use is for outdoor irrigation during the summer months. With summer just around the corner, bringing with it the greatest opportunity for making substantial conservation gains, immediate action is essential. As a result, the Board will begin assessing compliance with the submittal of the June monthly report on July 15, 2015. Beyond June, the Board will track compliance on a cumulative basis. Cumulative tracking means that conservation savings will be added together from one month to the next and compared to the amount of water used during the same months in 2013. This tracking will look like the sample graph below.

### **Example Comparison of Monthly Savings and Cumulative Savings**

	<b>2013 Water Use</b>	<b>2015 Water Use</b>	<b>Monthly savings</b>	<b>Cumulative or Running Savings</b>
<b>June</b>	1000	800	20%	20%
<b>July</b>	1500	1050	30%	26%
<b>August</b>	1200	1020	15%	22%
<b>September</b>	900	825	8%	20%





Two additional tools are included in the proposed emergency regulation to both expedite the investigation of water suppliers not meeting their conservation standard and to require the implementation of actions to correct this situation. A proposed informational order would require water suppliers to respond to request for information or face immediate enforcement. The proposed conservation order can be used to direct specific actions to correct non-compliance. Both of these tools are tailored to the emergency circumstances that the State finds itself in as a result of continuing drought conditions. Violation of an information or conservation order carries a penalty of up to \$500 per day.

The Board will work with water suppliers along the way that are not meeting their targets to implement actions to get them back on track. These actions could include changes to rates and pricing, restrictions on outdoor irrigation, public outreach, rebates and audit programs, leak detection and repair, and other measures. The Board may use its enforcement tools to ensure that water suppliers are on track to meet their conservation standards at any point during the 270 days that the emergency regulation is in effect.

## **Conclusion**

No one knows how the future will unfold. While the state may return to “normal,” or even to above average hydrologic water conditions in 2016, such an outcome is far from certain. If there is a fifth, or even sixth, year of water scarcity the emergency regulation will have contributed to safeguarding the state’s future water supplies, thereby forestalling potentially dramatic economic consequences. An example of the challenge facing the State comes from Australia, which experienced persistent and severe drought across most of its continent between 2002 and 2012. Over the full course of the 10 years of drought, half a percentage point may have been shaved from Australia’s GDP growth rate due to water curtailments, lowered productivity, unemployment and reduced exports. A half-point reduction in GDP growth is significant: if this were to occur in California, cumulative state output would be reduced by close to half a trillion dollars over the same 10-year span of time.

The State Water Board is committed to working with water suppliers around the State on implementation of the emergency regulation to reduce the risk that the State faces if drought conditions do not abate. A workshop to discuss implementation of the emergency regulation will be scheduled for October 2015, and the Board will continue to receive monthly updates and hear public comment as it has been doing since adopting its initial emergency regulation in July 2014.

As Governor Brown said on April 1, 2015, when announcing his fourth Executive Order since the drought began, “All of us in so many different parts of California, doing so many different things, have to now pull together in our own different contexts to do what is required.”

*(This fact sheet was last updated on April 28, 2015)*