



# Fact Sheet

## **DRAFT REGULATIONS IMPLEMENTING 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.

### **Early Input**

To maximize input in a short amount of time, the State Water Board released a proposed regulatory framework for implementing the 25% conservation standard mandated by the Executive Order on April 7, 2015. This will result in water savings amounting to approximately 1.3 million acre-feet of water over the next nine months, or nearly as much water as is currently in Lake Oroville. Draft regulations are now available for informal public comment that consider and incorporate the input contained in over 250 comments submitted by water suppliers, local government, businesses, individuals, and non-governmental organizations. Key areas of comment focused on the methodology behind 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.

### **What's Next**

During this second informal comment period, we are soliciting feedback on the updated approach reflected in the draft regulation as well as comment on the specific regulatory language. Please submit comments by email to Jessica Bean at [Jessica.Bean@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:Jessica.Bean@waterboards.ca.gov) by April 22, 2015. The draft regulation will be further refined based on comments received and the Notice of Proposed Emergency Rulemaking and accompanying revised regulatory language will be released on April 28<sup>th</sup> for public comment and consideration by the Board at its May 5-6, 2015 regular business meeting.



## Draft 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. Many communities around the State have been conserving for years. Some of these communities have achieved remarkable results with residential water use now hovering around the statewide target for indoor water use, while others are using many times more. Everyone must do more, but the greatest opportunities to meet the statewide 25% conservation standard now 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 and other factors.

In response to comments and suggestions, the draft regulation assigns urban water suppliers to a tier of water reduction based upon three months of summer residential gallons-per-capita-per-day data (July-September). These three months reflect the amount of water used for summer outdoor irrigation, which provides the greatest opportunity for conservation savings.

The number of tiers has more than doubled, from the proposed regulatory framework, to more equitably allocate the conservation savings necessary to reach the statewide 25 percent reduction mandate. This updated 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 that were in the 35% reduction tier in the prior proposal may now be in the 32% or 28% tier if their summer 2014 R-GPCD was below 210. Adding additional tiers to the conservation framework also better reflects past conservation efforts because water suppliers that have reduced use prior to the drought will have a lower R-GPCD and 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	64.99	23	8%
3	65	79.99	21	12%
4	80	94.99	42	16%
5	95	109.99	41	20%
6	110	129.99	51	24%
7	130	169.99	73	28%
8	170	214.99	66	32%
9	215	612.00	94	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 bring their total water use down 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.

The draft regulation describes two situations where water suppliers could request to modify their total water use or be placed into a lower conservation tier:

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 multiple 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, precipitation amounts, and the number of years that those supplies could last.

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.

*An open question is whether the draft regulation should allow multiple suppliers to join together to meet a collective conservation standard. In order to achieve a statewide 25% reduction in urban water use, the group as a whole would need to achieve the same amount of water savings as they would as individual suppliers. This approach could provide additional flexibility in achieving the conservation standard and allow for uniform messaging and implementation across contiguous service areas. There are many uncertainties, however, related to the appropriate geographic scope, group leadership, compliance assessment, accountability, and enforcement. Input is requested regarding how a collective approach could be administered that addresses these uncertainties and achieves the required reduction in water use.*

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

Under the current proposal, 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. Commercial, industrial, and institutional users with independent supplies will also be required to reduce usage by 25% 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 delivered by drip or microspray is prohibited.

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 draft 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.

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.

## **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 draft 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. In addition, they must report on 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) will not be 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**

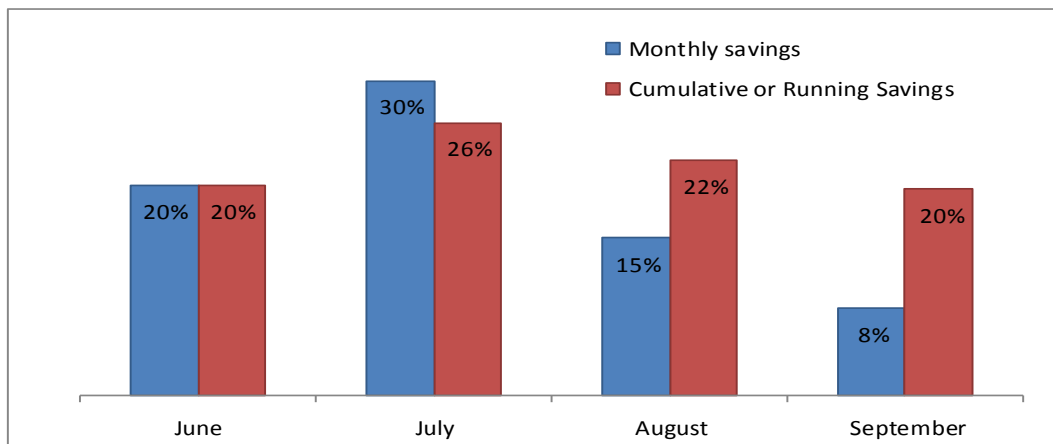
In many communities around the state, over half (and up to 80 percent) of total residential water use is for outdoor irrigation during the summer months. With summer just around the corner, bringing with it the greatest opportunity for making substantial conservation gains, immediate action is essential. As a result, the Board will begin assessing compliance with the submittal of the June monthly report on July 15, 2015.

Commenters pointed out that a month-by-month comparison of the percentage reduction in water use is confusing to the public because of the potentially wide variation in results due to temperatures, precipitation, and other factors. Several comments suggested using a 12-month rolling average; however a cumulative approach will also eliminate the wide swings that can occur in a month-by-month comparison and give a more accurate sense of progress. 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.

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## Example Comparison of Monthly Savings and Cumulative or Running Savings

	2013 Water Use	2015 Water Use	Monthly savings	Cumulative or Running Savings
<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 draft regulation to both expedite the investigation of water suppliers not meeting their conservation standard and require the implementation of actions to correct this situation. A new informational order is proposed that water suppliers would be required to respond to 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.

### **In Conclusion**

The Board received many comments on how to incorporate factors correlated with water use, such as climate, density, past conservation achievements, growth, and others. Many of these factors are accounted for in the State's 20x2020 conservation approach adopted in 2009, and they are relevant to a longer-term conservation policy. While the draft regulation does not directly adjust the conservation standards based on climate or other factors, the increase in the number of tiers gives many communities in the hotter, inland areas a lower conservation standard than they would have otherwise been subject to.

There were also many comments that discussed how recycled water and other new sources of water supply should factor in to the conservation standard. Many suggested that potable recycled water supplies be excluded from the amount of water subject to the conservation standard and that a credit system be established to also recognize investments made in developing non-potable recycled water supplies (which are not included in Total Water Production). Both of these sources of supply add resiliency and are key to a more sustainable water future. These suggestions were not integrated into the draft regulations because while the State, our federal government partners and local governments have provided much needed capital to make these projects work; they are still sources of supply that need to be managed judiciously, especially in times of drought.

The staff appreciates the extensive input submitted from individuals, communities and organizations around the State. In particular, comments that targeted specific concerns and provided specific solutions were very well received. There has been a wealth of input on actions that are more appropriately dealt with over the longer term, not necessarily in this rulemaking. These suggestions will be considered as the Board moves forward in establishing permanent regulations for water usage, conservation, and reporting under Provision 9 of the Executive Order as well as additional temporary emergency regulations that may be needed if it does not rain significantly next winter.