

April 22, 2015

Ms. Jessica Bean
Engineering Geologist
State Water Resources Control Board
1001 I Street, 24th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

Subject: Comment Letter #2—Draft Water Conservation Regulations to Achieve a Statewide 25 Percent Reduction in Potable Urban Water Usage

Dear Ms. Bean:

The Santa Clara Valley Water District (District) appreciates the opportunity to provide the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) with comments on the draft Emergency Water Conservation Regulations released on April 18, 2015, to achieve a statewide 25 percent reduction in water use.

As the primary water resources and groundwater management agency for the nearly 2 million residents and wholesaler to 13 urban water suppliers of Santa Clara County, the District strongly supports efforts by the Governor and State Water Board to reduce water usage in response to the ongoing, extreme drought. In this fiscal year, the District has dedicated over \$20M to drought response including enhanced outreach, increased water conservation rebates including over \$10M in approved landscape conversion rebates, and supplemental water acquisition. Despite these proactive measures, total water use was reduced by only 13 percent in 2014, short of the Governor's and our Board of Director's call for 20 percent of 2013 usage. Due to reduced groundwater recharge and increased groundwater pumping, an estimated 80,000 AF was withdrawn from local groundwater reserves in 2014, which lowered water levels to the point of concern regarding long-term land subsidence.

In March 2015, our Board of Directors increased the call for potable water use reductions to 30 percent based on the urgent need for action to protect the county's groundwater basins and minimize the risk of permanent land subsidence. Over 13 feet of subsidence has occurred historically in Santa Clara County, and subsidence poses significant threats in terms of damage to critical infrastructure, salt water intrusion, flooding, and loss of economic productivity in the heart of Silicon Valley should it resume. From this perspective, we offer the following comment and suggested language for your careful consideration:

The State Water Board should defer conservation calls to water wholesalers, where the wholesaler has requested a higher conservation rate.

The Governor's Executive Order directs the State Water Board to consider the relative per capita water use within a given water supplier's service area for the establishment of tiers. The District acknowledges and appreciates urban water supplier efforts that have resulted in



Ms. Jessica Bean

Page 2

April 22, 2015

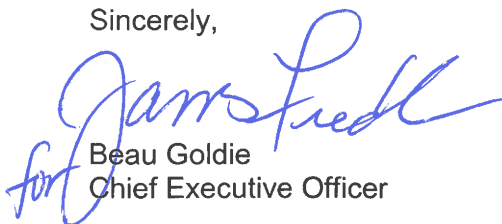
increased water use efficiency. However, the proposed conservation standards should consider calls for urgent conservation made by local water wholesale agencies, which in some cases may be higher than the State Water Board target. These requests are based on local needs; in our case, the need to protect our groundwater basins and minimize the risk of additional land subsidence. In consideration of local needs, we recommend that the State Water Board defer to local water wholesale agencies that have called for a higher level of savings than the State, and that the State Water Board revise their conservation standards to be consistent with these local requests. This approach would help ensure consistent messaging within local communities, a key issue in engaging the community to achieve the needed savings.

In order to provide the wholesalers this flexibility, we suggest the following language to be added to the Emergency Drought Regulations released for review and comment by the State Water Board on April 18, 2015:

Section 865 (c)(1) should be amended to read: "To prevent the waste and unreasonable use of water and to meet the requirements of the Governor's April 1, 2015 Executive Order, each urban water supplier shall reduce its total potable water production by either the percentage identified as its conservation standard in this subdivision or by the percentage called for by the water wholesale agency from which it receives its supply, whichever is greater. Each urban water supplier's conservation standard considers its service area's relative per capita water usage."

As the groundwater management agency and water wholesaler for Santa Clara County, we are committed to reducing water demands and protecting local resources during this extreme drought. We look forward to continued discussions with the State Water Board, Department of Water Resources, and other state agencies to help ensure sustainable water supplies. Please contact me at (408) 630-2634, if you would like to discuss these recommendations or if we can assist the State Water Board in any way.

Sincerely,


Beau Goldie
Chief Executive Officer

cc: Felicia Marcus, State Water Resources Control Board
Caren Trgovcich, Chief Deputy Director
Nancy McFadden, Office of the Governor
Board of Directors (7)

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