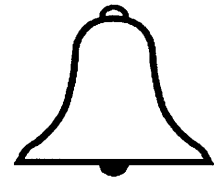


BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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(5/5-6/15) Board Meeting- Item 6
Emergency Conservation Regulation
Deadline: 5/4/15 by 10:00 am



Santa Margarita Water District

May 4, 2015

Honorable Felicia Marcus, Chair
C/O Jeanine Townsend, Clerk of the Board
State Water Resources Control Board
1001 I Street, 24th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

Submitted via e-mail
commentletters@waterboards.ca.gov



Subject: Comment Letter – Emergency Conservation Regulations

Dear Ms. Marcus

Santa Margarita Water District (SMWD), the second-largest retail water agency in Orange County, appreciates the State Water Resources Control Board's (SWRCB) iterative approach to development of the draft regulations and the opportunity to provide further comments on the Board's framework for implementing the new regulations.

Our specific concerns about the framework primarily center on providing clarification relating to growth. We feel this is necessary to ensure that the framework will provide for reaching the Governor's mandated 25 % reduction in urban water use, while maintaining local economic growth, which includes new housing construction.

Governor Brown did not discourage growth but recognized the need for housing and the benefits to the economy in his order. As an agency that has seen significant growth since 2013, and having prepared Water Supply Assessments and Written Verifications as mandated by State regulations, for sustainable development, the allocation plan does not recognize that we are providing for efficient water use. **The Conservation Regulations should include provisions that recognizes the implementation of efficient indoor use and drought tolerant landscaping measures for those new units constructed since 2013.** Otherwise it puts water districts in the position to be arbitrators on new connections which are sorely needed in their respective communities. The following or similar language is provided for your consideration:

Sec. 865. Mandatory Actions by Water Suppliers.

(f) Each urban water supplier serving residences, commercial and public facilities constructed since June 30, 2013 shall subtract the amount of potable water supplied to those facilities from that supplier's potable water production total, provided the supplier can demonstrate that such facilities meet or exceed the R-GPCD conservation standard identified for that water supplier pursuant to this section.

State Water Resources Control Board
Comments on Regulations
May 4, 2015
Page 2

In addition, both existing and new development within the District are subject to the Orange County Fire Authority Vegetation Management Guidelines (Guideline C-05, which are predicated on California Fire Code Title 24, Part 9, Chapter 49). These guidelines contain four fuel modification zones, two of which require irrigation. Due to human safety and the protection of public and private property, an allocation for water use should be provided for in the Emergency Regulations.

SMWD has taken several steps already to meet the 25% reduction. The District's board has provided direction on many initiatives including significant capital expenses and outreach operations with a goal of adoption by May 11th. We also have performed significant public outreach including a workshop for over 200 Homeowner Association board members, managers and landscapers to layout the goals for each to reduce water demand

With 155,000 customers, SMWD is supportive of all efforts for reductions in urban water use to address this current drought and preparing ourselves for what is clearly the "new normal" for California. We hope our suggestions will result in more realistic measurement of the District's improvements in water use efficiently so that we can collectively reach the Governor's target reduction.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions,

Very Truly Yours

SANTA MARGARITA WATER DISTRICT



Daniel R. Ferons
General Manager
danf@smwd.com