



Media Release

State Water Board Adopts Extended Emergency Water Conservation Regulation

Extended Regulation Gives More Flexibility to Water Suppliers to Meet Conservation Targets

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SACRAMENTO – With California still experiencing severe drought despite recent rains, the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) today adopted an extended and revised [emergency regulation](#) to ensure that urban water conservation continues in 2016.

The regulation extends restrictions on urban water use through October 2016 while providing urban water suppliers more flexibility in meeting their conservation requirements. It also directs staff to report back on additional flexibility once more complete water supply information is known in April. The action follows Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr.'s Nov. 13, 2015, [Executive Order](#) directing the State Water Board to extend the emergency water conservation regulation should drought conditions persist through January 2016.

“After four years of extreme drought, there is still a need for Californians to keep up their stellar conservation practices,” said Felicia Marcus, chair of the State Water Resources Control Board. “This updated regulation acknowledges that need, while making adjustments in response to feedback from water suppliers and others. If we continue to receive a lot of rain and snow in February and March, we may scale back the conservation requirements further, drop them, or move to another approach.”

Under the revised regulation, statewide water conservation is expected to exceed 20 percent compared to 2013 water use. The revised regulation responds to calls for greater consideration of certain factors that influence water use in different parts of the state, including hotter-than-average climate, population growth, and significant investments in new local, drought resilient water sources such as wastewater reuse and desalination.

Due to the severity of the water deficits over the past four years, many of California's reservoirs and groundwater basins remain [depleted](#), and the need for continued water conservation persists. Today's action serves as the fourth iteration of the emergency regulation since the State Water Board first instituted statewide conservation requirements in July 2014.

C A L I F O R N I A E N V I R O N M E N T A L P R O T E C T I O N A G E N C Y



STATE WATER RESOURCES CONTROL BOARD

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The State Water Board will continue to track water conservation efforts for each of the state's urban water suppliers (those with more than 3,000 connections) on a monthly basis. Compliance with individual water supplier conservation requirements will continue to be based on cumulative savings since June 2015. Cumulative tracking means that conservation savings will be added together from one month to the next, including conservation achieved under the Board's May 5, 2015, emergency regulation, and compared to the amount of water used during the same months in 2013.

Summary of Conservation Regulation Adjustments

The updated emergency regulation continues to specify how much water communities must conserve based on their residential gallons per capita per day (R-GPCD) data (from July through September 2014), and provides recognition for certain factors affecting water use, along with other changes detailed below:

- Credits and adjustments to urban water suppliers' conservation standards are now available. They range from 2 percentage points to a maximum of 8 percentage points. In some cases, water suppliers are automatically credited based on conditions in their service areas. In other cases, water suppliers must supply specific information to support and determine the size of an adjustment.
- The regulation provides credits in three ways:
 - 1) Considering the differences in climate affecting different parts of the state;
 - 2) Providing a mechanism to reflect water-efficient growth experienced by urban areas; and
 - 3) Recognizing significant investments made by suppliers toward creating new, local, drought-resilient sources of potable water supply.
- The regulation creates penalties for homeowners' associations or community service organizations that block, stifle or threaten homeowners from reducing or eliminating the watering of vegetation or lawns during a declared drought emergency in violation of existing law.

This regulation extends the original framework that has resulted in a statewide water conservation rate of 25.5 percent over a seven-month period, according to [December conservation](#) data released earlier today. Even assuming all of the 400-plus water agencies receive the applicable credits offered in this regulation, the statewide cumulative conservation rate is still projected to exceed 20 percent.

"We expect a savings rate greater than 20 percent, but perhaps not quite achieving the prior call for 25 percent," said Marcus. "We anticipated this might occur with any tweaks to our existing regulation. This regulation should still allow this state to save more than 1 million acre-feet of water through October 2016 – which is enough water to serve an average of two million California families. While we are hopeful that we are turning the corner on this drought, the

truth is that it's just too soon tell. Any additional water we can conserve to today will serve us well tomorrow if the drought continues.”

For additional information and examples of how the credits would be calculated and applied, please see the fact [sheet](#).

Next Steps

The regulation will now be submitted to the Office of Administrative Law, which will review and approve or deny the regulation. If approved by the Office of Administrative Law, the regulation will take effect immediately and remain in effect for 270 days from the approval date.

For more information, please visit the [Emergency Water Conservation](#) website.

To learn more about the state's drought response, visit [Drought.CA.Gov](#).

Every Californian should take steps to conserve water. Find out how at [SaveOurWater.com](#).

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