



John V. Rossi
General Manager

Securing Your Water Supply

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Division 1

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Donald D. Galleano
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S.R. "Al" Lopez
Division 5

July 14, 2014



Ms. Jeanine Townsend
Clerk to the Board
State Water Resources Control Board
P.O. Box 100
Sacramento, CA 95812-2000

Delivered via email to commentletters@waterboards.ca.gov

**COMMENT LETTER
JULY 15, 2014 BOARD MEETING ITEM 10:
EMERGENCY WATER CONSERVATION REGULATIONS**

Dear Ms. Townsend:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments for the State Water Resources Control Board's consideration regarding the proposed Emergency Water Conservation Regulations. Western Municipal Water District (Western) supports the Governor's call for increased water awareness, redoubled water conservation, and the long-term efficient use of water in California. As Western is both a wholesale and retail water agency in a semi-arid region, we believe that we can provide a unique perspective on water efficiency and conservation.

Western, like many agencies throughout the state, has partnered with the communities we serve to cultivate a new water use ethic. Western's Board of Directors has taken a proactive position regarding water use efficiency, adopting a Water Use Efficiency Master Plan in 2008 and implementing a water budget rate structure for all customer sectors in 2011.

The Master Plan identified technologies and measures designed to increase the efficient use of water. Our water budget structure is site-specific and incorporates provisions of both the State's Model Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance (AB 1881) and the Water Conservation Act of 2009 (SBx7-7). Western has invested significantly in customer incentive and support programs, as well as public outreach and education activities that continue to yield measureable results.

Western believes that the Water Board proposal has both positive elements and areas that need fine-tuning. We hope you will consider our comments constructive as they are presented in the best interest for



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achieving the desired results – a strategic and balanced reduction in urban water use – without unintended consequences.

Sec. X.1 Prohibited Activities in Promotion of Water Conservation

Western supports each of the prescribed numerical prohibitions in this section and has similar measures in place at all times, not just during drought. However, we believe that this section needs to be enhanced. In Sec X.1(a)(2), the addition of “trucks, trailers, boats, recreational vehicles and other types of mobile equipment” will provide clarity. Sec X.1(a)(4) should be modified to incorporate “water-play areas in public parks and recreation areas.” Furthermore, Sec X.1.(b) should be modified to clarify who will impose the potential fines, the local water agency or the Water Board. Finally, if the intent of the Water Board, in Sec X.1(b), is for the local agency to impose fines for violations, the language should be modified so that it does not prevent local agencies from imposing fines in excess of \$500 for each day if the agency has these fines defined in its existing or planned administrative documents or water shortage contingency plans.

Sec. X.2 – Mandatory Actions by Water Suppliers

Wholesale water suppliers have no direct connection to water users.

It is not clear to us how Sec. X.2 would be applied to a wholesale water supplier in a service area where there is no direct contact with the end user. Western recommends that the proposed regulations be written to exempt the wholesale water supplier from specific enforcement of the proposed provisions where there is no direct contact with the end use of water. The State Board should instead recommend that wholesale water suppliers work with local retail agencies to increase awareness of wise water use and educate consumers about the need for additional conservation during the drought.

Not all water shortage contingency plans are created equal.

Western appreciates the need to achieve measureable progress in urban demand reduction, but believes that the indiscriminate application of a single mandate by the Water Board to varied water shortage contingency plans statewide is unequitable, illogical, and disproportionately harms regions with more rigorous plans. If adopted as written, Sec. X.2(b) would require *each urban water supplier to implement all requirements and actions of the stage of its water shortage contingency plan that imposes mandatory restrictions on outdoor irrigation.*

One agency’s shortage contingency plan that imposes a mandatory irrigation restriction between the hours of 10 a.m. and 6 p.m. in an early shortage stage does not have the same impact as another agency plan that mandates that no water be applied on Monday, Wednesday or Friday. Moreover, restricting irrigation to specific days of the week is not compatible in regions where customers have been assigned water



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budgets. Many agencies have adopted water budget based rate structures and have the ability to lower outdoor water budgets as the supply situation warrants. In fact, four of the eight retail water utilities in Western's general service area have deployed water budget rates – the city of Corona, Elsinore Valley Municipal Water District, Rancho California Water District, and within Western's own retail division.

Western also has a Drought Factor built into its daily outdoor water budget calculation. The use of a drought factor allows for strategic and targeted reduction of water use when supply conditions warrant. Additionally, the use of a drought pricing signal, in concert with reduced water budgets, drives customers to use less in their landscape without adding significant labor costs associated with policing water use. Western requests that the Water Board consider options to include alternative, more cost-effective mechanisms rather than applying a "one-size fits all" regulation.

Reporting production data takes time and money.

Western understands the importance of reporting production values at reasonable milestones, but we believe that monthly reporting places an unnecessary burden on agencies – especially smaller agencies. Western requests that the Water Board reduce reporting requirements from monthly to quarterly increments. Finally, the Water Board's use of production data should be weather normalized and account for water demand increases that are attributable to growing populations and new demands due to new and/or expanding commercial and industrial needs.

Thank you for your consideration of Western's comments. If you have questions about Western's water use efficiency efforts, water shortage contingency plan, or the contents of this letter, please contact Tim Barr, Western's Deputy Director of Water Resources, at tbarr@wmwd.com or by phone at 951.571.7254.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John V. Rossi", is written over a horizontal line.

JOHN V. ROSSI
General Manager

JVR:tb