CITY OF
ANDERSON

April 22, 2015

California State Water Resources Control Board
Attn: Ms. Jessica Bean
1001 I Street, 24th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

Subject: Comments on Mandatory Water Conservation Proposed Regulations

Dear Ms. Bean,

The City of Anderson (COA) appreciates this opportunity to comment on the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) staff's "Mandatory Conservation Proposed Regulatory Framework" (Regulatory Framework) and the draft table entitled "Urban Water Suppliers and Proposed Regulatory Tiers to Achieve 25% Use Reduction" (Conservation Standard/Tiers Table) released on April 7, 2015.

The City of Anderson appreciates that the SWRCB staff has quickly responded to the Governor's April 1 Executive Order by preparing these preliminary regulatory proposals to address Executive Order provisions 2, 5, 6, and 7.

The City of Anderson supports the Governor's Executive Order and its key provisions to reduce potable urban water usage by 25 percent statewide over the coming months. We appreciate the effort that the SWRCB staff has devoted to soliciting input from all stakeholders on the ways to do this effectively.

Based on the Governor's Executive Order the emergency drought regulations needs to be implemented in a way that addresses two core policy principles which are inherent in the Executive Order and the Administrations overall response to the drought:

1. Protect economic uses of potable water, while focusing efforts to reduce water use; and
2. Ensure fairness for communities statewide.

The calculated indicator of residential gallons per capita per day (R-GPCD) from July to September 2014 is proposed by the SWRCB staff as the sorting mechanism for the proposed Conservation Standard/Tiers Table used to assign conservation targets to water suppliers. This summer time "snapshot" does not provide a fair measure of comparative water use efficiency, as it is fundamentally biased by local climate conditions (e.g. geographic locations), among other factors that vary significantly from one community to another statewide. The SWRCB states on its website "It is not appropriate to use Residential Gallons Per Capita Day (R-GPCD) water use data for comparisons across water suppliers, unless all relevant factors are accounted for."

Some of the important factors that are listed on the SWRCB site (www.waterboards.ca.gov/waterrights/water_issues/programs/drought/conservation_reporting_info.shtml) include:

- Rainfall, temperature and evaporation rates.
- Population density

Climate Variables

In order to be fair to all California communities, consideration of each community's unique climate needs to be factored into any reasonable drought emergency plan. It appears that the draft drought regulations do not recognize that urban areas that are located in the inland valleys have much higher average temperatures, evapotranspiration rates, and lower humidity than more temperate coastal and mountain areas during the months of July to September. The proposed use of July to September 2014 R-GPCD water use as a reasonable basis for the nine tier categories of the draft plan appears to penalize those inland valley areas (such as COA) and rewards areas closer to the coast. The City would propose that the Board consider utilizing a climate adjustment element to adjust the tiers in order to standardize the differences in California's climate.

Urban Density

Urban densities should also be considered when deliberating the proposed drought tier structure. Typically, densely populated urban areas have higher tax revenues per capita that can be used to fund, maintain, and repair parks and recreational sports facilities. Smaller, less populated rural urban areas have less tax revenue per capita that can be used to operate, maintain and repair their parks and sports facilities. For a small community, such as ours, these facilities generate a significant income to the City in parks and recreation fees. By not considering urban density in the water allocation tiers, the SWRCB is compelling rural urban areas, such as the City of Anderson, to drastically reduce its ability to maintain its parks and recreation fields which will result in a reduction in an important source of recreation income and may significantly and permanently damage these facilities that the City tax payers have paid for and will ultimately have to repair. Although all cities will feel this impact, in regard to their sports and parks facilities, it is the smaller less populated communities that will struggle to try and find the fees and tax revenue to repair these valuable facilities in the future. Therefore, we would recommend that urban population density be considered as a part of the tier system being considered by the SWRCB.

Unique Water Supplies

The City of Anderson's main source of water comes from pumping ground water from the Redding Groundwater Basin (Redding Basin). The Redding Basin sits under the northern end of the central valley and it has been estimated, by the California Department of Water Resources, that it contains over 3.5 million acre feet of high quality drinking water. In lieu of California Assembly Bill 3030 (the Groundwater Management Act) the Redding Area Water Council, in which the City of Anderson is a member, published the 1998 (updated in 2007) Groundwater Management Plan for the Redding Groundwater Basin. The primary purpose of this management plan was to avoid conditions by the council members that would adversely affect groundwater availability and quality of the Redding Basin and to monitor the health of the aquifer in order to sustain it for future generations. For those cities that are lucky enough to be able to tap into this water source, the

management plan indicates "Over the long term, groundwater levels in the Redding Basin have remained steady" which suggests that his water source is stable even through historical drought conditions.

In order to protect the Redding Basin and to respond to last year's State drought requirements, the City of Anderson implemented its own drought contingency plan that incorporates its unique geographic location. The City's drought plan institutes using monitoring data of ground water levels within the City's municipal wells and establishes groundwater levels that reflect the health of the Redding Basin aquifer. For example, if average annual groundwater levels start to decline, the City's drought plan would implement mandatory reductions in water consumption to its residential and commercial connections. We believe that the City's drought contingency plan identifies the unique characteristics of the City's main water source and recognizes that this water source is limited in its availability, due to geography and economic factors. We feel that the City's drought contingency plan is better suited to protect the City's economic uses of potable water and it also endorses fairness per the Governor's Executive Order.

Therefore, the City would propose that the SWRCB include an "exception process" as a part of the proposed Emergency Drought Regulations. This process would allow water suppliers to present to the Water Board specific information in regard to the unique characteristics of the supplier's water sources, including its availability and restrictions. It is hoped that this exception process would allow water suppliers to provide evidence supporting local drought contingency plans versus the "broad-brush" State regulations that are currently being considered.

Recycle and Reuse

Finally, if the SWRCB is truly interested in saving water, then the emergency drought regulations should recognize and give credit to those communities for their generation of recycled water to replace state water reserves. The use of recycled water to replenish valuable California water sources such as rivers, lakes, ground water basins and streams should be credited to those communities that deliver it directly into the State's water supplies. For example, the City of Anderson delivered over 436 million gallons of processed and usable water to the Sacramento River from the City's water pollution control plant in 2014. This volume of recycled water would equate to roughly 1,340 acre feet or enough water to support 1,340 single family homes.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments. The City of Anderson will continue to work with the Water Board to identify ways to effectively implement the Executive Order and the resulting Emergency Regulations. If you have any questions, please contact me at (530) 378-6641

Sincerely,

Bruce Crom,
City of Anderson Deputy Public Works Director