



Central Basin

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April 13, 2015

Ms. Jessica Bean
State Water Resources Control Board
P.O. Box 100
Sacramento, CA 95812-0100

RE: Proposed Mandatory Conservation Regulatory Framework Comments

Dear Ms. Bean:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the proposed regulatory framework in response to Governor Brown's April 1, 2015 Executive Order directing the State Water Board to impose restrictions to achieve an aggregate statewide 25% reduction in potable urban water use through February 2016. Central Basin Municipal Water District (Central Basin) strongly supports the Governor's response to a statewide historic drought and will assist its retail water agencies in achieving the appropriate water use reduction targets.

Central Basin is a public agency that wholesales imported water to cities, mutual water companies, investor-owned utilities and private water companies by serving a population of more than 2 million people living within 24 cities and unincorporated county areas in southeast Los Angeles County. Central Basin has more than 40 percent of its service area considered as disadvantaged communities. Central Basin also provides the region with recycled water for municipal, commercial, and industrial use.

Central Basin has been a leader in water conservation and has a strong history of aggressively saving water through long-term investments in conservation. As a result of efforts that include rebates and educational programs, water use throughout our service area is resulting in an average of 87 gallons per day.

Central Basin has reviewed the State Water Resources Control Board's (State Board) proposed the regulatory framework to achieve the 25% reduction in potable water use statewide. Additionally, Central Basin supports areas that have been identified by the Bay Area Water Supply and Conservation Agency proposing the following modifications and a request for further clarification:

Modification 1: Incorporate a 15% “Conservation Standard” for those water suppliers with residential consumption levels between 55–80 GPCD to better reflect the relative difficulty of these water suppliers to meet additional water use reduction targets

The tiered conservation categories established by the State Board go a long way towards capturing the relative difficulty that water suppliers who serve already efficient customers will have in meeting the new potable water use reduction targets. However, the large increase between the first and second “conservation standard” (i.e., from 10% to 20%) would pose a disproportionate burden on water suppliers in the bottom portion of the second range (i.e., GPCD 55-110), many of who would end up with residential GPCD levels below commonly accepted health and safety standards¹.

To moderate this impact, Central Basin suggests the addition of a separate 15% conservation standard for those water suppliers with residential per capita consumption levels between 55–80 GPCD. This addition would (1) eliminate the disproportionate impacts on water users who are already among the most efficient water users in the State, (2) ensure that water suppliers are not required to achieve reductions resulting in residential GPCD levels below the commonly accepted health and safety levels, and (3) still allow the State Board to meet its water use reduction target².

Modification 2: Increase the “breakpoint” for the first two ranges from 55 GPCD to 60 GPCD to reduce the number of water suppliers required to achieve water use reductions resulting in residential GPCD levels below health and safety standards

Water suppliers at the top end of the lowest GPCD range (i.e., Under 55 GPCD) are already at or near the aforementioned health and safety standard. Increasing the bottom range to 60 GPCD would ensure that these water suppliers are not required to achieve reductions resulting in residential GPCD levels below the commonly accepted health and safety levels.

¹ Dr. Peter Gleick, in his report on basic water requirements for human activities, identifies 200 liters per person per day, or 52 GPCD, as necessary for drinking, sanitation, bathing and cooking needs in moderately industrialized countries.

² Central Basin's analysis of the data provided by the State Water Board in the Urban Water Supplies and Proposed Regulatory Framework Tiers to Achieve 25% Use Reduction document shows that the proposed changes of (1) adding an additional tier and (2) increasing the breakpoint from 55 GPCD to 60 GPCD would result in a change in total statewide reductions of less than one-half of 1%.

The following table reflects Central Basin's recommendations of (1) an additional residential GPCD Range and corresponding conservation standard and (2) an adjustment of the first and second GPCD ranges:

R-GPCD Range (Sept 2014)	# of Suppliers within Range	Conservation Standard
Under 60	22	10%
60-80	38	15%
80-110	84	20%
110-165	132	25%
Over 165	135	35%

Modification 3: Allow those small water suppliers who can demonstrate residential consumption levels during the September 2014 baseline period that would place them in a conservation target level lower than 25% be assigned to the appropriate lower target level

As presently proposed, small water providers would be required to achieve a uniform 25% water savings regardless of current per capita consumption levels while urban water suppliers are assigned varying conservation targets based on their recent residential per capita use. As noted above, the tiered conservation standards developed by the State Board recognize the relative burden that different water suppliers face when meeting the proposed reduction levels, especially those who are near or below water consumption levels necessary to meet the basic health and safety needs.

Consistent with Ordering Provision 2 of the Governor's Executive Order, which states "restrictions should consider the relative per capita water usage of each water suppliers' service area," Central Basin recommends that the State Board allow those small water suppliers who can demonstrate residential consumption levels during the September 2014 baseline period that would place them in a conservation target level lower than 25% be assigned to the appropriate lower target level.

Question: Clarification on the State Board's assessment of a water supplier's compliance

The proposed regulatory framework states, "the State Water Board will assess suppliers' compliance for both monthly and cumulative water usage reductions." Please provide additional information regarding the State Board's process and metrics for determining whether a water supplier is meeting its conservation standard. Will the State Board consider compliance based on a single month comparison against the same month in

2013 or will compliance be based on a rolling average? Will the State Board consider that the savings potential is generally greater in the summer months?

Comparing water savings on a monthly basis may not provide an accurate basis for evaluating savings due to meter read schedules as well as emergency events such as fires or main breaks that can impact the production data for a single month. To account for this, Central Basin suggests that the State Board establish quarterly targets to evaluate each water supplier's progress toward its conservation standard (e.g., the first compliance assessment for the conservation standard would assess total production for June, July, and August),

Thank you again for your consideration of these comments on the proposed Mandatory Conservation Regulatory Framework. If you have any questions regarding the proposed modifications or the clarification question, please contact me at (323) 201-5548 or via email at kevinh@centralbasin.org.

Sincerely,



Kevin Hunt, P.E.
Interim General Manager