



Media Release

State Water Board adopts standards that would reduce water loss by nearly 35%

Water loss reduction and monitoring standards will require California water suppliers to use water more efficiently

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SACRAMENTO – The State Water Resources Control Board has adopted [new performance standards](#) for urban retail water suppliers—the utilities that provide water to people in California cities—that it estimates will save about 88,000 acre-feet of water per year, or enough to supply over 260,000 households, by requiring suppliers to monitor and reduce leakage in their distribution systems.

“As climate change induces hotter and drier conditions, we must conserve water as much as possible and become more efficient on all fronts,” said E. Joaquin Esquivel, chair of the State Water Board. “Water loss from distribution systems for drinking water is often out of sight. The new performance standards will not only reduce that water loss by over a third, they will also cut energy costs and greenhouse gas emissions by lowering the amount of water needing to be treated and distributed.”

Set to come into effect in April 2023, the new regulation will bring about more efficient water use in California by providing retail suppliers with a volumetric standard that sets cost-effective levels of achievable water loss, given their water systems’ characteristics and budgets. Suppliers will be required to start meeting individual volumetric loss standards over a three-year period beginning on Jan. 1, 2028.

The standards are not a one-size-fits-all approach to solving water waste; they are designed to give each water supplier the flexibility to choose its own approach to meeting standards for its systems. Some systems, such as those from disadvantaged communities, may be given more time to meet regulation criteria.

Performance standards for water loss form one component of the conservation framework established by SB 606 and AB 1668 in 2018, known as the [Making Conservation a California Way of Life legislation](#), which created a foundation for long-term improvements in water conservation to adapt to climate change. The legislation directs the development of standards and objectives requiring water suppliers to use water more efficiently.



CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

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Up until now, the monitoring and mitigation of water loss has been limited to voluntary efforts by suppliers.

The State Water Board's mission is to preserve, enhance and restore the quality of California's water resources and drinking water for the protection of the environment and public health, and to ensure proper resource allocation and efficient use for present and future generations.