

OAKLAND LANDSCAPE COMMITTEE
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TO: Members, State Water Conservation Board: Felecia Marcus, Frances Spivy-Weber, Tam Doduc, Steven Moore, Dorene D'Adamao; State Senator Loni Hancock; Governor Jerry Brown

FROM: Gordon Piper, Chair, Oakland Landscape Committee

SUBJECT: "7-15-16/14 BOARD MEETING (Emergency Regulations For Waters Conservation)."

I lead the Oakland Landscape Committee nonprofit in Oakland and work on four public gardens/park gardens in the Oakland Hills and its Very High serving area residents. Two of the public gardens are City of Oakland park site gardens and two of the public gardens are Caltrans properties, where our Landscape Committee is either the Adopt A Spot partner for the City of Oakland, or the Adopt A Highway for Caltrans and the Department of Transportation. We have worked on these public gardens for 8 to 20 years. We have helped to develop, landscape, maintain and irrigate the plantings in these public gardens and park gardens serving area residents, such as: the City of Oakland's Gateway Garden and Gateway Emergency Preparedness Exhibit Center; the Firestorm Memorial Garden on Caltrans property; the City of Oakland's Frank Ogawa Firescape Garden at the North Oakland Sports Field; and the Broadway Pollinator Garden.

We are writing to urge the modification or elimination of the current language proposed in Section X.1 (1) of the proposed Emergency Regulations related to the application of the water to outdoor landscape in a manner that causes runoff such that water flows on to public walkways, roadways, and or a parking lot. In working with the public agencies on the public gardens and park gardens, we have had to work with irrigation specialists for either the City or Caltrans or private irrigation specialist to install automated irrigation system to water the public gardens. Some of the irrigation irrigation heads and lines in these public gardens and park gardens are located next to either sidewalks, roadways, or a parking lot. Some of the systems are automated with battery-powered controllers, and the controllers are typically programmed to come in early morning hours to

water the plant materials and to conserve water. The location of the irrigation heads has usually been developed by landscaping/irrigation professionals to effectively water plantings in the public gardens and parks adjacent to the sidewalks, roadway or parking lot where people or vehicles might frequent and where there could be a greater potential fire risk from a source such as a cigarette. To adequately water plantings, there sometimes needs to be irrigation allowed that on occasion might result in a limited amount of runoff on a sidewalk, roadway or parking lot. The current wording of Section X.1 (1) we feel is definitely too rigid, needs to be modified, and if adopted without modification I feel would lead to the public agencies turning off the water entirely supporting plantings in these public and educational gardens that we have worked over many years to develop and maintain. The results of such action would be to:

- * wipe out many plantings in the public gardens and maintenance efforts/enhancements in some significant portions of these City park/garden sites and State Adopt-A-Highway gardens on Caltrans properties that we have helped public agencies and private partners to develop and maintain,
- * to add to fire risk in our public spaces and parks; and
- * to discourage public/private agency partners, greening organizations and volunteers from helping to landscape and maintain many parks, public gardens, and some public open space area in a more fire-resistant manner.

Our Oakland Landscape Committee grew out of a catastrophic fire in 1991 in the Oakland/Berkeley hills that destroyed 3500 homes, caused billions in dollars in property losses, and led to 25 deaths and hundreds being injured. We have served on the City of Oakland's Wildfire Prevention District Advisory Committee in the past and know the importance of irrigating vegetation, particularly in areas like City parks and public gardens where there are many users and where a match or cigarette could potentially cause a major fire to get started.

We urge the State Water Conservation Board to modify the language of Section X.1(a) (1) to provide for exceptions to be granted for public gardens and park gardens in California urban cities on public properties that fall within either high or very high fire hazard safety zones. This would permit effective public and private partnerships involving volunteers and public agency employees to continue to water and maintain these public gardens and park landscaping in a more fire-resistant manner. The State Water

Conservation Board should adopt modified language allowing for some exceptions to Section X.1 (a) (1) as we have proposed, which can support fire prevention and maintenance efforts on public properties. Thank you for considering the proposed modifications to Section X.1. (a).