



HUMBOLDT BAY MUNICIPAL WATER DISTRICT

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2-7-17 Board Meeting-Item 9
Urban Water Conservation to Implement EO B-29-16
Deadline: 2/6/17 12 noon

February 6, 2017



Ms. Jeanine Townsend
Clerk of the Board
State Water Resources Control Board
1001 I St., 24th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

2/7-8/17 Board hearing Item #9 – Urban Water Conservation Regulations

Dear Ms. Townsend:

Executive Order B-37-16, adopted on May 9, 2016, included assertions that drought conditions persisted, and that such conditions could persist into 2017. Those were the findings on which the May 18, 2016 emergency conservation regulations were based. However, those conditions no longer persist.

The Executive Order directs the State Water Resources Control Board to develop a proposal for extending the emergency conservation regulations, to “prepare for the possibility of another dry winter.” However, as noted below, the winter of 2016-17 is not dry – it is the wettest on record so far. Consequently, there is no rationale for extending the emergency conservation regulations, due to the fact that there is no longer a drought emergency. The current regulations should expire.

Water Year 2016-17 is the wettest on record for all three basins in the Central Valley, which are the primary source of water supplies in California. The state’s major reservoirs currently hold more than 18.5 million acre-feet, and all but New Melones are above the flood control limit. There is no more room to store any additional runoff. Nevertheless, the snowpack is currently above the April 1 average, and represents another 18 million acre-feet of supply that will be available as it melts. The NOAA one-month precipitation outlook shows all of northern California to be likely to have above normal precipitation and the rest of the state likely to have normal precipitation. The three-month outlook shows that normal precipitation is expected for the whole state. The three-month outlook also shows that temperatures are expected to be normal, as well.

While there is currently no reason to do anything other than let the emergency conservation regulations expire, should there be some major change in temperature and the snowpack be depleted before April 1, and should some disaster happen that would cause the state’s

reservoirs to dwindle to the levels seen in 2014, the State Water Resources Control Board has the authority under Section 1058.5 of the Water Code to reinstate emergency regulations and impose conservation requirements on urban – and agricultural – water agencies.

As reported in the stress test results in 2016, over 80% of California's urban water agencies calculated that they had enough supply to meet demand in 2019, even were there to be three additional dry years similar to 2013-15. Precipitation levels have now exceeded the annual average in all basins of the Central Valley, so there is no possibility that water supplies would be inadequate to meet demand in 2017. For this reason, and for all of the reasons stated above, there is no longer a drought emergency, nor any need for emergency conservation regulations for urban water supply.

Sincerely,



Paul Helliker
General Manager