



Media Release

URBAN WATER SUPPLIERS SHOW PROGRESS IN AUGUST WATER CONSERVATION REPORT

BOARD EXPRESSES COMMITMENT TO CONTINUING REVIEW OF WATER AGENCY DROUGHT STAGE ACTIVATION EFFORTS

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Water conservation efforts in California's urban communities continued their upward trend, climbing to 11.5 percent statewide for the month of August, according to the latest retail water supplier report released today by the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board).

The August statewide water saving rate is a significant jump from the 7.5 percent reported in July and 4 percent in June, as compared to a year ago.

The report also found that 81 percent of the water agencies reporting have instituted outdoor water use restrictions. Despite these gains, members of the State Water Board expressed concern about the 19 percent, or 76 water suppliers, that have not yet implemented their water shortage plans to mandate outdoor use restrictions. This outdoor water use restriction is a key action for urban water suppliers under the [emergency water conservation regulation](#) because outdoor watering comprises a large percentage of urban water use, as much as 80 percent in some areas. Next month, water districts will be required to report "residential gallons per capita per day" in an effort to determine average water consumption per person.

The Board also directed that staff check on the adequacy of compliance of those submitting plans to assure that they meet the letter and intent of the regulations.

"Many more California communities are taking the drought seriously and making water conservation a priority – and residents are responding," said Felicia Marcus, Chair of the State Water Board. "Increasing urban water conservation is definitely a good thing. The trend is terrific. However, while we can hope for rain, we can't count on it, so we must keep going. Every gallon saved today postpones the need for more drastic, difficult, and expensive action should the drought continue into next year.

"At a time when hundreds of thousands of acres of farmland lie fallow, communities across the state are running out of water, fish and wildlife are suffering, and no one knows whether it will



rain or snow much this winter, it makes good common sense for urban Californians to do what they can to use less water.”

Water savings increased in all 10 hydrologic (or similar rain zones) regions of the state during August, ranging from 6.9 percent in the Colorado River region (near the Mexican border) to 22.6 percent in the Sacramento River region.

The biggest month-to-month increase in conservation came from the South Coast region which reported a 7.8 percent increase in conservation for August – compared to the 1.6 percent reported for July.

In Southern California, conservation through turf removal continued to increase, with August applications to remove 3.8 million square feet, or 2,533 front yards, from residential customers. In the commercial sector, 7.5 million square feet, or 130 football fields’ worth of turf, was slated for removal. Since the beginning of the year, \$42.9 million in rebates for turf removal have been requested, demonstrating Southern Californians’ interest in permanently reducing their water use.

Approximately 27 billion gallons was saved in August, up from 18 billion gallons saved in July. Approximately 95 percent of the state’s large urban water suppliers submitted their conservation reports, which accounts for 98 percent of the population that they serve or 33.5 million Californians.

The State Water Board is working with the remaining 19 non-reporting water suppliers to ensure their water production data is provided as required by the Emergency Conservation Regulation. The State Water Board is also spot checking general water supplier compliance with the regulation.

In his Jan. 17, 2014, Emergency Drought Proclamation, Governor Brown called for Californians to voluntarily reduce their water use by 20 percent. The trend of increasing reductions shows that many California communities have met and exceeded the call to conserve, but more can and must be done to protect our water supplies should the drought persist. All communities should do as much as they can. Current forecasts indicate that Californians cannot count upon a wet winter to alleviate the drought conditions.

Additional Resources and Next Steps

The water production data for August, July and June is available here:

http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/waterrights/water_issues/programs/drought/docs/uw_supplier_data100714.xlsx

The staff presentation to the Board is available here:

http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/waterrights/water_issues/programs/drought/docs/uwc_staffpresentation100714.pdf

The next reporting cycle will include an estimate by each water supplier of the amount of water used each day by their residential customers. This estimate, called “residential gallons per capita per day” or R-GPCD, more accurately portrays water use and lets communities compare their efforts more accurately with others around the state. Data for September is due to the Board on Oct. 15.

The R-GPCD estimate also highlights areas where conservation actions over the long term have resulted in significant water savings. Some communities have been conserving for many years and were using far less water per person per day than others before this drought. Others are starting later, but making significant progress. Both are good, and both can do better.

Board staff is working with water suppliers that have either not reported, not implemented their Water Shortage Contingency Plan or have been found to be out of compliance through random spot checks and complaints to correct any deficiencies.

The State Water Board will closely monitor the implementation of the regulations and the weather over the coming months to determine if further restrictions are needed.

The Emergency Conservation Regulation will be in effect until April 25, 2015, and may be extended if drought conditions persist.

Governor Brown has called on all Californians to reduce their water use by 20 percent and prevent water waste – visit SaveOurWater.com to find out how everyone can do their part, and visit Drought.CA.Gov to learn more about how California is dealing with the effects of the drought.