



Media Release

Urban Water Conservation Improves in April Ahead of June 25 Percent Conservation Mandate

WATER DISTRICTS REPORT FIRST FULL MONTH OF STATEWIDE ENFORCEMENT EFFORTS

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SACRAMENTO – With a mandatory average conservation rate of 25 percent beginning this month for all state residents, the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) announced that Californians in cities and towns increased their water conservation to 13.5 percent in April. In addition, nearly 400 water suppliers responded to a first-ever enforcement report, indicating a high level of local activity to respond to reports of leaks and suspected water wasting.

“We hope the improved conservation rate for April shows that residents and businesses stepped up to begin to meet the call for greater conservation in the face of this historic and ongoing drought,” said State Water Board Chair Felicia Marcus. “While these results are a step in the right direction, there are still too many lush landscapes where irrigation must be reduced to meet the 25 percent statewide reduction mandate. We see conservation gains in all regions of the state, but we don’t know whether it was because of cooler weather or concerted action. In particular, the South Coast demonstrated significant improvement, but the real test will be what happens as we move into the hot and dry summer months, when we need to keep the sprinklers off as much as possible.”

In May, the State Water Board adopted an [emergency regulation](#) requiring an immediate 25 percent reduction in overall potable urban water use statewide beginning in June, in accordance with Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr.’s April 1 [Executive Order](#). The Executive Order required, for the first time in the state’s history, mandatory conservation for all residents and directed several state agencies, including the State Water Board, to take immediate action to safeguard the state’s remaining potable urban water supplies in preparation for a possible fifth year of drought.

In the most recent survey of nearly 400 urban water suppliers, the amount of water saved by the state’s large urban water agency customers statewide increased from 3.9 percent in March



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to approximately 13.5 percent in April, in same month water use comparisons of 2015 to 2013. The year 2013 serves as a baseline to determine water savings statewide since the 2014 emergency water conservation regulations have been in effect. The cumulative statewide percent reduction for June 2014-April 2015 (11 months) is 9 percent.

The regulation adopted by the State Water Board on May 5 uses a sliding scale, so that communities that have been conserving water will have lower mandates than those that have not conserved this past year and/or over the last decades since the last major drought. The regulation places each urban water supplier into one of eight tiers which are assigned a conservation standard, ranging between 8 percent and 36 percent.

The State Water Board is currently reviewing new data submitted by over 200 urban water suppliers. The revised data, if accepted, will change the conservation standard for some water suppliers. The Board expects to publish the final conservation standards for all 411 urban water suppliers by the end of the week.

Each month, the State Water Board will compare every urban water suppliers' water use with their use for the same month in 2013 to determine if they are on track for meeting their conservation standard. Local water agencies will determine the most cost effective and locally appropriate way to achieve their standard. The State Water Board will be working closely with water suppliers to implement the regulations and improve local efforts that are falling short.

“Whether 12, 24, or 36 percent, these reductions are achievable if we reduce our outdoor irrigation, fix our leaks, and think about our water use every day,” said Marcus. “We know that when people pay attention to their water use they can make significant reductions, so we need everyone to make conservation a part of their summer routine. A quarter of water suppliers statewide still allow 7 days a week watering, which is not sending the right message when on average 50 percent and in some cases 80 percent of urban water use is on outdoor landscapes. This summer, watering lawns should be the exception rather than the rule, while we reserve our precious landscape water for trees.”

Enforcement Data Now Reported Every Month

In March, the State Water Board [renewed an emergency regulation](#), first adopted in July 2014, which require water districts to report water use every month to the State Water Board. The renewed emergency regulations monthly reporting requirements were expanded to include the limit on days for outdoor irrigation and a description of compliance and enforcement efforts. Based on the first full month of enforcement and compliance, in April (395 urban water suppliers reporting):

- 22,674 water waste complaints were submitted to 325 suppliers statewide;

- 22,173 formal warnings were issued for water waste by 260 suppliers statewide;
- 838 penalties were issued by 43 suppliers statewide;
- 12 (3%) suppliers reported that mandatory restrictions are not in place;
- 97 (25%) suppliers reported no restrictions on the number of days per week outdoor irrigation is allowed.

Water Conservation Efforts Improve

Monthly residential water savings statewide were 13.5 percent in April compared with April 2013. That is up from the 3.9 percent water savings in March compared with March 2013. Broken down by hydrologic region, the results show that all parts of the state showed savings improvements compared to March.

Water Savings by Hydrologic Region June 2014 to April 2015

Hydrologic Region	Jun-14	Jul-14	Aug-14	Sep-14	Oct-14	Nov-14	Dec-14	Jan-15	Feb-15	Mar-15	Apr-15	Trend
Central Coast	9.5%	13.5%	15.2%	15.9%	14.4%	21.3%	29.2%	9.4%	9.0%	9.3%	17.6%	
Colorado River	6.6%	3.1%	7.0%	5.9%	5.4%	6.7%	6.3%	12.3%	-0.9%	7.3%	12.8%	
North Coast	3.9%	10.2%	13.2%	9.5%	21.9%	19.4%	15.9%	16.1%	7.3%	-4.3%	23.4%	
North Lahontan	3.6%	4.3%	13.3%	-0.7%	-6.9%	-2.6%	14.2%	9.6%	14.2%	12.1%	37.5%	
Sacramento River	11.8%	19.8%	22.0%	16.4%	18.6%	25.7%	21.5%	6.0%	14.2%	11.7%	23.7%	
San Francisco Bay	10.2%	13.0%	15.1%	15.4%	14.9%	17.7%	21.0%	2.4%	8.2%	6.4%	19.9%	
San Joaquin River	6.6%	12.3%	13.2%	10.0%	10.0%	20.9%	18.3%	12.6%	13.6%	11.5%	19.9%	
South Coast	-0.1%	1.9%	8.1%	7.7%	1.6%	3.4%	23.7%	6.5%	-2.6%	0.6%	8.7%	
South Lahontan	5.2%	3.9%	9.8%	7.7%	0.2%	0.6%	8.9%	9.8%	5.8%	10.4%	10.5%	
Tulare Lake	5.7%	8.3%	13.6%	11.5%	6.5%	16.5%	26.4%	9.1%	9.7%	4.9%	17.3%	
Statewide	4.3%	7.3%	11.7%	10.3%	6.7%	10.0%	22.3%	6.8%	2.6%	3.9%	13.5%	

From June 2014 through April 2015, more than 175.6 billion gallons have been saved compared with the same period in 2013 – enough to supply 2.35 million California residents for a year.

Per Capita Daily Water Use Rises Slightly

In addition to the conservation data, the State Water Board also discussed the reported residential gallons per-capita per day (R-GPCD) for April. The discussion focused on estimated daily water use by residential customers for more than 400 urban water suppliers statewide.

R-GPCD by Hydrologic Region June 2014 to April 2015

Hydrologic Region	Jun-14	Jul-14	Aug-14	Sep-14	Oct-14	Nov-14	Dec-14	Jan-15	Feb-15	Mar-15	Apr-15	Trend
Central Coast	98.9	94.1	90.1	88.0	82.6	67.5	54.0	60.2	61.7	64.0	70.0	
Colorado River	243.7	244.0	223.1	186.1	171.1	167.4	118.5	116.6	134.2	125.9	161.2	
North Coast	89.9	98.7	84.9	86.6	68.8	56.5	58.1	55.9	56.4	62.6	60.6	
North Lahontan	174.7	166.0	165.4	144.4	111.3	74.5	69.2	69.9	62.5	58.2	63.8	
Sacramento River	194.2	200.4	179.9	165.4	131.1	89.3	70.8	73.9	74.4	97.0	103.4	
San Francisco Bay	99.1	98.5	90.9	84.2	76.8	63.0	53.2	56.9	57.8	63.5	65.8	
San Joaquin River	202.3	202.0	178.6	160.7	132.2	91.7	72.7	70.2	73.4	95.2	106.4	
South Coast	122.1	120.4	113.0	113.4	104.3	88.7	65.2	73.6	79.8	83.8	90.7	
South Lahontan	192.9	195.0	184.1	162.9	136.3	109.4	75.6	76.0	80.4	97.4	117.2	
Tulare Lake	201.4	213.3	191.8	180.7	149.7	107.0	80.7	75.2	78.7	100.7	128.5	
Statewide	134.2	133.9	123.9	119.0	106.0	86.3	65.6	71.0	75.5	82.8	91.0	

Statewide average R-GPCD for April 2015 was 91 gallons, an increase compared to the March statewide average R-GPCD of 82.8. With the exception of the North Coast Hydrologic Region, hydrologic region R-GPCDs were higher in April than they were in March for all hydrologic regions. To see the full report, click [here](#).

Examples of some communities with the respective R-GPCD averages for April 2015 in various hydrologic areas (in parenthesis) include: San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (San Francisco Bay) with 44 R-GPCD; City of Santa Cruz (Central Coast) with 40 R-GPCD; California-American Water Company Monterey District (Central Coast) 56 R-GPCD; City of Santa Rosa (North Coast) with 56 R-GPCD; City of Stockton (San Joaquin River) with 92 R-GPCD; City of San Diego (South Coast), with 66 R-GPCD; San Jose Water Company (San Francisco Bay), with 68 R-GPCD; City of Fresno (Tulare Lake), with 108 R-GPCD; City of Sacramento (Sacramento River) with 86 R-GPCD; Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (South Coast), with 75 R-GPCD; City of Riverside (South Coast), with 92 R-GPCD; Sacramento County Water Agency (Sacramento River), with 118 R-GPCD, and California Water Service Company, Bakersfield (Tulare Lake) with 152 R-GPCD.

For additional information on water use, please visit the following resources:

- The Pacific Institute has an R-GPCD mapping tool [here](#).
- The State Drinking Water Program has an urban water R-GPCD Calculator [here](#).

Background

In his April 1 Executive Order, Governor Brown mandated a 25 percent water use reduction for cities and towns across California.

During 2014, the State Water Board took action to increase access to recycled water in an effort to augment scarce water supplies. Water recycling is the use of treated municipal wastewater for beneficial purposes, such as agricultural and landscape irrigation, industrial processes, and replenishing ground water basins. In March, the Board approved new low-interest financing terms for water recycling projects to help California produce an additional 150,000 acre-feet of recycled water annually. The effort makes available \$800 million in loans for projects such as recycled water treatment and distribution and storage facilities that can be completed by 2017. In June, the Board adopted a general order that makes it easier for communities to use non-potable recycled water for agriculture, landscape and golf course irrigation, and other uses. During the year, various regional boards took action to approve the use of recycled water for local projects under their jurisdiction.

For more than two years, California has been dealing with the effects of drought. To learn about all the actions the state has taken to manage our water system and cope with the impacts of the drought, visit Drought.CA.Gov.

Every Californian should take steps to conserve water. Find out how at SaveOurWater.com.

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