



South Tahoe Public Utility District

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Felicia Marcus
State Water Resources Control Board Chairperson
P.O. Box 100
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Ms. Marcus:

The South Tahoe Public Utility District (District) appreciates the opportunity to comment on the December 21, 2015 Proposed Regulatory Framework for Extended Emergency Regulation of Urban Water Conservation. We also appreciate the significant effort the Board has undertaken to solicit input on these regulations and thank you for the opportunity to participate in the working group.

Climate Adjustment - We strongly support the climate adjustment concept as outlined in the Proposed Framework. While we would prefer to see even more credit given to areas with dryer climates and that the reduction not be limited to a total of 4%, we support the concept and appreciate the Board's willingness to recognize the need for equitable application of the conservation standards.

Snow Making - We request that water for snowmaking be included in the agricultural exemption. Water for snowmaking accounts for 3% of the District's total annual water production, and in the winter months it can account for more than 15% of total monthly water production. As an economically disadvantaged community, employment resulting from winter sports is critical for a significant portion of our community.

Sustainably Managed Groundwater – We are disappointed that an adjustment for sustainably managed groundwater supplies has not been included. We request that water supplied from groundwater basins that are not over drafted and where all water extracted from a groundwater basin is less than the natural annual groundwater recharge be given the same consideration as surface water in Section 865 (c)(2) in the current regulations. As written, the current regulation states:

(2) Each urban water supplier whose source of supply does not include groundwater or water imported from outside the hydrologic region in which the water supplier is located, and that has a minimum of four years' reserved supply available may, submit to the Executive Director for approval a request that, in lieu of the reduction that would otherwise be required under paragraphs (3) through (10), the urban water supplier shall reduce its total potable water production by 4 percent for each month as compared to the amount used in the same month in 2013. Any such request shall be accompanied by information showing that the supplier's

sources of supply do not include groundwater or water imported from outside the hydrologic region and that the supplier has a minimum of four years' reserved supply available.

We request that section 865(c)(2) be revised as follows:

(2) Each urban water supplier whose source of supply does not include ~~groundwater or~~ water imported from outside the hydrologic region in which the water supplier is located, ***and if all groundwater extracted by the water supplier is extracted from a groundwater basin that is not over drafted and the combined ground water extraction by all ground water users is less than the natural annual recharge,*** and that ***water supplier*** has a minimum of four years' reserved supply available may, submit to the Executive Director for approval a request that, in lieu of the reduction that would otherwise be required under paragraphs (3) through (10), the urban water supplier shall reduce its total potable water production by 4 percent for each month as compared to the amount used in the same month in 2013. Any such request shall be accompanied by information showing that the supplier's sources of supply do not include groundwater ***from any groundwater basin that is over drafted, and does not include ground water from any groundwater basin from which water extracted has exceeded the natural annual recharge,*** or water imported from outside the hydrologic region, and that the supplier has a minimum of four years' reserved supply available.

The District is concerned that the continued use of mandatory statewide reductions in potable urban water use may undermine new regulations under the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA). The District believes that local agencies should have the authority to determine appropriate water conservation measures that are consistent with the sustainable yield of the groundwater basin for which they are designated to manage. Mandatory statewide reductions do not recognize the hydrologic diversity across the state. Where groundwater extractions are less than the sustainable yield, imposition of large mandatory reductions erodes public confidence that these reductions are fair and reasonable.

The District's water supply comes entirely from groundwater. The water extracted by all of the groundwater users from the Tahoe Valley South Groundwater Basin amounts to much less than the annual recharge. **This groundwater basin is being sustainably managed, and we should not be held to the same conservation standard as those areas with over drafted groundwater basins.**

Going Forward – We are concerned about the rumored permanent conservation regulations. Our hope is that any such regulations will go through a full vetting process that will not be rushed so that complex issues, such as groundwater, may be addressed.

Thank you again for providing us with this opportunity to comment on the December 21, 2015 Proposed Regulatory Framework for Extended Emergency Regulation of Urban Water Conservation.

Sincerely,



Richard H. Solbrig
General Manager/Engineer