



Board of Directors
Al E. Fox
Division 1
Jeffrey C. Brown
Division 2
Timothy H. Hoag
Division 3
Eugene F. West
Division 4
Terry L. Foreman
Division 5
General Manager
Tony L. Stafford

December 22, 2017

The Honorable Felicia Marcus, Chair
and Members of the State Water Resources Control Board
c/o Jeanine Townsend, Clerk to the Board
State Water Resources Control Board
1001 I Street, 24th floor
Sacramento, CA 95814



Re: Comment Letter – Prohibiting Wasteful Water Use Practices

Esteemed Chair Marcus and Board,

We appreciate the opportunity to comment on the proposed regulation regarding permanent prohibitions on wasteful water uses. We understand that ACWA also has submitted comments on this matter, and we generally echo their sentiments. Our District already prohibits many of the practices described in the proposed regulation through our Water-Use Prohibitions in [Ordinance 40-16](#), and we therefore do not have serious qualms with the majority of the proposed regulations. The exceptions we do take are outlined below.

- **Runoff from outdoor landscapes “...in a manner that causes runoff such that water flows onto adjacent property, non-irrigated areas, private and public walkways, roadways, parking lots, or structures.”**

Camrosa’s existing rules and regulations ordinance includes a provision in the runoff prohibition: “...if such [runoff] can reasonably be prevented.” Given the intricacies, variability, and sheer volume of landscape irrigation, a hardline prohibition of any runoff whatsoever is an infeasible requirement, if not an outright impossible standard, and the enforcement of such a prohibition could easily overwhelm an agency’s customer service capacity. The State Board must retain a certain level of trust in local agencies to evaluate and enforce what constitutes “waste and unreasonable use” on the micro level, and leaving the interpretation to experienced water managers would be a demonstration of this confidence. We therefore **recommend that such a provision be added** to this prohibition.

- **“Apply potable water directly to driveways and sidewalks”**

We recommend that **an exception for health and safety also be included in any statewide regulation**. This commonsense addition is important for many reasons, some of which are highlighted by the recent Thomas Fire that affected our area and the cleanup that will be required in its wake. Homeowners must have the ability to clean and protect their homes and properties.

- **“Apply water to irrigate turf and ornamental landscapes during and within 48 hours after measurable rainfall of at least one-tenth of one inch of rain.”**

Using one-tenth of an inch of rain as the basis for adjusting irrigation would require an attention to precipitation that the vast majority of homeowners are simply not sophisticated enough to sustain. The distribution of sufficiently sensitive weather-based irrigation controllers that would be required to effectively control irrigation after one-tenth of an inch of rain would be overly burdensome and cost-prohibitive, not to mention the diligence and cost required by maintenance. The effect of such a specific and small amount of precipitation—specifically whether it would function as effective precipitation—varies widely depending on local conditions. The requirement to measure such an amount begs the question of over what period the precipitation must be measured, which the proposed regulations do not consider and at which point we should descend into minutiae unbecoming a regulation intended to apply to a 164,000-square-mile area. Local agencies must retain the autonomy to establish thresholds of precipitation, and we suggest that the **provision pertaining to a specific amount of rainfall be deleted**, which is consistent with the previous emergency drought prohibition.

- **“Irrigate turf on public street medians or publicly owned or maintained landscaped areas between the street and sidewalk, except where the turf serves a community or neighborhood function.”**

We wholeheartedly agree with ACWA’s contention that **irrigating turf should not be considered a wasteful use of water**. This is a community-based decision and should be left to local discretion, or “local sophistication,” as Board Member Steve Moore so aptly referred to it at the November 21 workshop.

The water budgets that the State Water Board is in the process of developing for urban water agencies across the state and plans to disseminate by the end of 2018 will, per force of the methodology used to calculate the budget, require efficient use of water. Each agency will have to make tough decisions in order to stay within these proscribed budgets—decisions that will be made according to the requirements of their communities. Whether or not to irrigate turf is one of those questions that must be resolved at the local level. A prescriptive mandate from the state is inappropriate and does not respect the expertise and knowledge of local officials, who are in the best position to make decisions for their residents.

Thank you for considering these comments. Should you or your staff have any questions, please don’t hesitate to contact me at TStafford@camrosa.com or (805) 482-4677.

Sincerely,



Tony Stafford, General Manager

cc: The Honorable Joaquin Esquivel, Member, State Water Board
The Honorable Dorene D'Adamo, Member, State Water Board
The Honorable Steven Moore, Member, State Water Board
The Honorable Tam Doduc, Member, State Water Board
Ms. Kim Craig, Deputy Cabinet Secretary, Office of Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr.
Mr. Tom Howard, Executive Director, State Water Board
Mr. Eric Oppenheimer, Chief Deputy Director, State Water Board
Mr. Erik Ekdahl, Director, Office of Research, Planning and Performance, State Water Board
Mr. Max Gomberg, Climate Change Mitigation Strategist, State Water Board
Mr. Timothy H. Quinn, Executive Director, ACWA
Mr. Dave Bolland, Director of State Regulatory Relations, ACWA