

Public comment on Water Conservation Regulations

I have a concern for those that rent homes or apartments that are responsible for their water use. As a renter, they may be the water customer from the city or water utility but the property owner may control or require all outdoor watering under the renter's account. The renter will pay for the utilities including water service. The property owner has a rental contract that requires the renter to maintain the property which may include all landscape.

Take the example below that was presented in the Fact Sheet. If the Jones family is renting the home and they are the water utility customer, and the property owner will not reduce outdoor water usage, then the family in this example would have to cut all indoor water use to get close to the required water conservation reduction.

The Jones family of four learn that their water district must reduce water use by 32 percent. An oil refinery uses 10 percent of the district's water and cannot reduce its use. Their city also has many small businesses, and a golf course, which can reduce use by more than 10 percent. The residents must now reduce their use by 30 percent to meet the overall 32 percent target. The Jones family uses an average of 1,200 gallons per day (or about 300 gallons per person); 300 gallons for indoor use and 900 gallons outdoors, to irrigate a large yard that includes grass and fruit trees. To cut water use by 30 percent, the Jones' must cut their water use by 360 gallons per day to 840 gallons which is equivalent to 210 gallons per person per day.

In the example, if outdoor usage, which may be required or controlled by the property owner, remains at 900 gallons per day, total usage cannot decrease to 840 gallons per day. They could only get close if they eliminated all indoor water use.

There needs to be some recognition about the existence of this renter-property owner responsibility and how to resolve problems when property owners will not reduce or will not allow reduction of water usage. The property owner has no incentive to reduce usage but to pass on all utility costs, fines, and compliance to the renter.

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