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May 4, 2015

The Honorable Felicia Marcus, Chair
State Water Resources Control Board
P.O. Box 100
Sacramento, CA 95812-0100



RE: **Emergency Conservation Regulations**

The League of California Cities is keenly aware of the historic drought gripping California for the fourth straight year. With a dismal April 2015 snowpack survey that found a water content level of 6% of average, the lowest on record, it was not surprising that Governor Brown issued the State's first ever Executive Order mandating 25% water reductions in cities and towns across California.

The League shares the Governor's desire to conserve potable water as the hot and dry summer months fast approach. We applaud the Governor and the State Water Resources Control Board for taking immediate action to conserve the State's dwindling water supply. All Californians must do their part to eliminate water wasting and limit water consumption. The League stands ready to help cities and towns meet the new water conservation standard.

While the League does not agree with all aspects of the Executive Order or the Proposed Emergency Regulations, we support the incentive based water conservation directives and the commonsense water use restrictions. These include:

- **Turf removal** – In partnership with local governments, 50 million square feet of lawns throughout the state shall be replaced with drought-tolerant landscaping.
- **Consumer Rebates** – Create a temporary, statewide consumer-rebate program to replace old appliances with more water- and energy-efficient models.
- **Drip irrigation** – Prohibit new homes and developments from irrigating outdoor landscaping with potable water unless water-efficient drip irrigation systems are used.
- **No runoff** – Prohibit runoff when irrigating with potable water.
- **Shutoff nozzles** – Prohibit using hoses with no shutoff nozzles to wash cars.
- **No watering during a storm** – Prohibit irrigation during and 48 hours after measureable rainfall.

The League fully understands how difficult it is going to be to reduce water consumption by 25% over the next 270 days. The Proposed Emergency Regulations reflect this challenge and attempt to limit the harmful impacts of the drought on local communities. The League believes that the State Water Resources Control Board should alter the Proposed Emergency Regulations to consider:

- **Water Conservation** – While the Proposed Emergency Regulations contain a sliding scale for the mandated conservation standard, it does not adequately take into account conservation measures already in place in jurisdictions that remain in the top tiers. A city in tier nine could have already achieved 25% water conservation over the last few years, but is required to save an additional 36% as outlined in the Proposed Regulations.
- **Lot size and local climate** – As proposed, the regulations do not factor in lot size or local climate conditions when establishing the conservation standard. Greater flexibility for compliance should be given to those cities and towns that have larger lot sizes or have climate conditions that necessitate additional irrigation.

The League appreciates the opportunity to provide input on the Proposed Emergency Regulations. It is our hope that the State Water Resources Control Board will continue to work with stakeholders as the regulations are implemented and provide additional flexibility for those having difficulty complying. Meeting the State's first ever mandatory water conservation standard will be a significant challenge for many cities in California. If you have any questions regarding the League's comments, please contact me at (916) 658-8264.

Sincerely,



Jason Rhine
Legislative Representative

cc: Members, State Water Resources Control Board