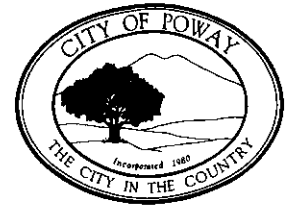


CITY OF POWAY

STEVE VAUS, Mayor
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JOHN MULLIN, Councilmember



November 30, 2015

Jeanine Townsend
Clerk to the Board
State Water Resources Control Board
1001 I Street, 24th Floor
Sacramento, CA, 95814



Subject: Comments- Urban Water Conservation Workshop December 7

Dear Ms. Townsend,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit the City of Poway's comments and suggestions regarding potential changes to the Emergency Regulation for Statewide Urban Water Conservation. We understand and appreciate the Board's efforts to achieve increased water conservation during drought conditions through the current Emergency Regulations; however, when reevaluating, changes to the unintended consequences of the current status quo regulations should be strongly weighed.

The regulations currently in place focus on achieving the State's water reduction standards solely through "one size fits all" conservation, and do not allow water agencies to realize the benefits of their substantial investments in water supply reliability – investments in self-reliance that are consistent with Governor Brown's Water Action Plan. The City of Poway has supported, through rate-payer monies, the San Diego County Water Authority's billions of dollars of investments in developing a portfolio of sustainable and drought-proof water supplies. The status quo regulations, which strip away the very protections that these alternative supplies provide, do not incentivize agencies to continue to invest in these very expensive and long-term drought-proof supplies. This ultimately hinders the State of California's ability to meet the growing demands for water supplies and makes us more vulnerable to long-term climate variability. The solution to this problem is for the State to amend the regulations to provide credits for supply development.

Like most water agencies in the State, the City of Poway is in the process of setting rates for 2016. With forced conservation lowering the sale of water, and fixed maintenance costs, water rates will be increasing for our customers. This is ultimately very frustrating for our rate-payers who, despite using less water, see their water bills increasing. Unfortunately, these increased rates affect the most vulnerable and economically disadvantaged customers the most. Additionally, the "paying more for less" concept undermines the City's conservation efforts and ultimately affects the investments in long-term and sustainable water supplies and infrastructure.

In addition to the financial burden that has been placed on the City's rate-payers, several other unintended consequences should be considered when decisions are made about potential changes to the current regulations. First, many of Poway's businesses are wholly dependent on water as a mainstay of their business. We cannot expect these job-creating businesses to reduce water use beyond their already efficient operations. Second, with mandatory cutbacks on irrigation days and times, the City of Poway is experiencing the unprecedented disease and die-off of trees. Along with the dry vegetation, the landscape has become extremely vulnerable to wildfires, which historically destroyed hundreds of homes in 2003 and 2007. Furthermore, this die-off increases the risk of soil-erosion and storm water pollution and runoff. Finally, the current regulations are threatening the values of our resident's properties by greatly increasing the uncertainty of the City of Poway's water future. A 32% reduction of water deliveries is tough for a prospective homebuyer or business to overlook.

In short, the City of Poway is supportive of a portfolio that includes drought-proof alternative supplies and water conservation efforts. Therefore, the following adjustments to the current regulations are recommended:

- Credits for the development of alternative supplies;
- Specific trigger points should be required to evaluate supply conditions between continued regulations and supply availability;
- If wholesale agencies can verify that they have an adequate water supply from various sources, then that agency, and its respective retail agencies, should receive a greatly reduced mandate or no mandate at all;
- Credits or offsets should be provided to each agency for the use of recycled water;
- The evaluation of climate adjustments, as California is a large and diverse state in regards to climate and geography;
- The current Agricultural Exclusion should be maintained; and
- While it is important to fund economically disadvantaged communities, all communities are affected by the drought, and the opportunity for drought-related funding should be open to all communities regardless of economic conditions.

It is extremely important to the City of Poway that modifications to the Emergency Regulations make it possible for water agencies to meet reduction targets through a combination of conservation and the development of sustainable alternative supplies. This more balanced and flexible approach could provide a better long-term solution for this drought and future droughts.

Sincerely,



Daniel Singer
City Manager

cc: Assemblymember Brian Maienschein
Senator Joel Anderson
General Manager, SDCWA