

# Making Water Conservation a California Way of Life

On May 9, 2016, Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr. issued Executive Order B-37-16. The press release stated “Moving to bolster California’s climate and drought resilience, Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr. today issued an executive order that builds on temporary statewide emergency water restrictions to establish longer-term water conservation measures, including permanent monthly water use reporting, new permanent water use standards in California communities and bans on clearly wasteful practices such as hosing off sidewalks, driveways, and other hardscapes.”

This Executive Order (EO) builds on the conservation accomplished during the drought and implementation of the Governor’s California Water Action Plan. The full text of the EO can be found online on the Department of Water Resources (DWR) website at <http://www.water.ca.gov/wateruseefficiency/conservation/>. The directives of the EO actions are summarized below.

Included with each section of this information sheet are questions to help focus and guide the discussion during the listening sessions. Please read and consider these questions as well as other input in preparation for the listening sessions.

## Use Water More Wisely

DWR and the State Water Resources Control Board (Water Board) will require monthly reporting by urban water suppliers on a permanent basis. This includes information regarding water use, conservation and enforcement. Through a public process and working with partners such as urban water suppliers, local governments, and environmental groups, DWR and the Water Board will develop new water use efficiency targets as part of a long-term conservation framework for urban water agencies. These targets go beyond the 20 percent reduction in per capita urban water use by 2020 that was embodied in SB X7-7 of 2009, and will be customized to fit the unique conditions of each urban water supplier.

**Deliverables:** DWR and the Water Board will publicly release a draft long-term conservation framework by January 10, 2017. This framework will include new water use targets based on strengthened standards for indoor residential water use, outdoor irrigation, CII water use, and distribution system water loss. The EO requires that these new targets are customized for each urban water supplier.

### Questions for Listening Sessions

1. What factors should be considered in developing the new standard based water use targets and customizing them for each urban water supplier?
2. How should the four standards listed in the EO be used to identify and determine those new water use targets and how urban water suppliers would implement them?
3. How should existing SBX 2020 targets, be considered in determining new targets?

## Eliminate Water Waste

The EO directs the Water Board to prohibit a number of practices that waste potable water, and directs the Water Board and DWR to minimize system leaks, accelerate data collection, improve system management, and prioritize capital projects that reduce water waste. The California Energy Commission (CEC) and California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) also have EO roles in eliminating water waste.

**Deliverables:** The Water Board and DWR will take actions to minimize water system leaks across the state that continue to waste large amounts of water. The CPUC will take actions to minimize leaks, and CEC will certify innovative water conservation and water loss detection technologies.

### **Questions for Listening Sessions**

4. What actions should the State and/or urban water suppliers take to accelerate leak detection and repair?
5. How can the State Agencies contribute or support local efforts to identify leaks and reduce related potable water loss through leaks?
6. What key data should urban water suppliers be responsible to develop, and what data should the State provide?

## **Strengthen Local Drought Resilience**

In consultation with urban water suppliers, local governments, environmental groups, and other partners, DWR will strengthen standards for local Water Shortage Contingency Plans, which are part of the Urban Water Management Plans that water districts must submit every five years. Under new strengthened standards, districts must plan for droughts lasting at least five years, as well as more frequent and severe periods of drought. These plans must be actionable, so that districts can turn to them to guide their drought response.

**Deliverables:** DWR shall publicly release the updated draft requirements by January 10, 2017. For areas not covered by the Water Shortage Contingency Plan, DWR will work with counties to improve drought planning for small water suppliers and rural communities.

### **Questions for Listening Sessions**

7. After five years of drought conditions, how can water shortage contingency plans requirements be improved and strengthened to make the plans a more effective tool for urban water suppliers to respond to future droughts?
8. Which elements of a water shortage contingency plan requirements are conducive for developing uniform statewide standards, and which requirements should be more flexible to account for local conditions?
9. How can small supplier and rural community drought planning be improved and strengthened?

## **Improve Agricultural Water Use Efficiency and Drought Planning**

DWR, working with the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA), will update existing requirements for Agricultural Water Management Plans so that irrigation districts quantify their customers' water use efficiency and plan for water supply shortages.

Current law requires agricultural water districts serving 25,000 acres or more to file such plans. The EO increases the number of irrigation districts who must file water management plans by lowering the threshold to irrigation districts serving 10,000 acres or more. DWR will check the plans to ensure they quantify conservation efforts and adequately plan for water shortages.

**Deliverables:** The Water Board and DWR will work with water suppliers to accelerate data collection, improve water system management, and prioritize capital projects to reduce water waste. DWR and CDFA will seek public input on the updated standards, and release a public draft of proposed changes by January 10, 2017.

### **Questions for Listening Sessions**

10. How could the Agricultural Water Management Planning requirements (AWMPs) better identify local measures and practices to improve water use efficiency?
11. How could the AWMP better quantify improvements in water use efficiency?
12. The Sustainable Groundwater Management Act requires local Groundwater Sustainable Agencies to complete a water balance for the groundwater basin. Should water balances be part of AWMPs?
13. Are there ways the AWMP reporting requirements can be streamlined with other reporting requirements including SGMA and the Irrigated Lands Program?

### **Compliance Methods**

To ensure compliance with the provisions of the EO, DWR, Water Board, and CPUC will work together to develop methods which could include technical and financial assistance, regulatory oversight and enforcement mechanisms.

### **Stakeholder Engagement Process and Schedule**

DWR, Water Board, CDFA, CPUC, and CEC as members of a State Agency Team are working together to carry out the EO and will convene venues to engage stakeholders in the process including urban water suppliers, agricultural water suppliers, environmental organizations, local governments, tribes, and other partners. The State Agency Team is convening public Listening Session on June 3, 6, and 7, 2016 to describe the Executive Order and receive initial public comments on its implementation.

The State Agency Team will engage stakeholders to inform the development of the deliverables listed above. The stakeholder engagement process and schedule are being developed and will be posted online at: <http://www.water.ca.gov/wateruseefficiency/conservation/>

The questions listed above focus on specific EO actions for which the State Agencies are seeking feedback; comments or input on items not specified may be discussed at the Listening Sessions or submitted to: [WUE@water.ca.gov](mailto:WUE@water.ca.gov).



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