

Kathy Ormiston
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Dear Sir or Madam: I am writing to comment on the proposed modifications to the Model Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance. I am a garden designer in Mountain View, California. I currently work on smaller residential projects, but aspire to someday work on larger projects. Whether the Model Water Landscape Ordinance allows garden designers to participate in the design of landscapes covered by the ordinance is of great concern to me and other garden designers.

Section 492.6(13) of the ordinance seems to open the door to garden designers signing off on landscape designs. My understanding is the California Professional Code is not completely clear on whether garden designers can sign landscape designs. Some have interpreted the code to allow garden designers to sign the design if it is a conceptual design, a planting plan or an irrigation plan. The Code definitely prevents garden designers from signing off on parts of a plan that involve grading or drainage -- that is limited to licensed contractors or landscape architects.

I would argue it is very important that garden designers be *explicitly* allowed to participate in the Model Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance landscape design submission and certification process. Garden designers design many of the new and renovated residential landscape projects over 5000 square feet. I think we are often ahead of landscape contractors and landscape architects in promoting sustainable gardens with our clients. Garden designers who have been trained at California community colleges, like Foothill College in Los Altos, have had extensive coursework in irrigation design and low water plant materials. Other garden designers learn about efficient irrigation through taking classes from Ewing Irrigation Supply and CLCA, and by working in the field.

The goal of the Department of Water Resources should be to have as many people as possible trained to design and certify water efficient gardens. If the ordinance limits participation in the program to an elite cadre of licensed contractors and architects, I am afraid the availability of water smart landscape design for residences will be severely constrained. Homeowners will likely see bids for residential landscape designs soar. California could even end up with more water wastage not less as many homeowners chose to indefinitely delay updating or installing their landscapes.

One option to make the Ordinance more inclusive might be to return to a slightly amended version of an earlier draft: 492.6(13) the signature of a licensed landscape architect, license landscape contractor or any other applicable landscape professional, including garden designer. A garden designer could be defined as "a design professional who has successfully completed coursework in and/or has demonstrated knowledge of efficient irrigation design and low water plant materials."

I appreciate the opportunity to comment on the Ordinance and hope you will review my concerns and suggestions carefully,

Sincerely,

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