

Colvin, Judith

From: mweo-bounces@water.ca.gov on behalf of Virginia Hayes [vahayes@lotusland.org]
Sent: Thursday, March 27, 2008 8:25 AM
To: mweo@water.ca.gov
Subject: [MWEO] comment on AB 1881
Attachments: Letter re AB 1881.doc

Attached, please find a letter with comments on AB1881, (Laird, 2006) the Water Conservation in Landscaping bill. We respectfully submit these for consideration by the Department.

Thank you,
Virginia Hayes, Curator

Ganna Walska Lotusland
695 Ashley Rd.
Santa Barbara, CA 93108

(805) 969-3767, ext. 104

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March 27, 2008

Judy Colvin
Department of Water Resources
Office of Water Use Efficiency and Transfers
901 P Street, Room 313A
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Ms. Colvin,

Please accept the following comments regarding AB1881, (Laird, 2006) the Water Conservation in Landscaping bill.

Lotusland is a 37-acre botanic garden located on the former estate of Madame Ganna Walska in Santa Barbara County. Over a period of 40 years, the late Madame Walska collected and planted her private garden with many plants that are now rare and endangered in their native habitats. She created a non-profit foundation to preserve the collections and make them available to the public, educators and botanists. The Foundation is dedicated to maintaining her heritage in as sustainable a way as possible, including conserving California's water resources. We applaud the Department for recognizing the value of this resource and seeking ways to educate people about this issue.

While many of the plant collections at Lotusland are xeric in nature (cycads, cacti and other succulents), there are also other collections that require consistent irrigation (ferns, begonias, bromeliads and more). Very little of the irrigation water used on the property comes from the local water purveyor, instead it is supplied from a well on-site and yet it seems that, under this bill, any new projects undertaken might still be required to be submitted for review.

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There are many other botanical institutions in the state of California that are also preserving fragile and irreplaceable plant collections. Their missions are to recover, rehabilitate and even reintroduce endangered plants. Some of these collections could be put at risk by the restrictions in this bill. The bill makes exemptions for recreational areas and cemeteries, so we submit that it could and should also include exemptions for botanical institutions. Many of these institutions are operating as non-profits and the financial burden that water audits and reviews would also entail would create an additional hardship.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit our concerns and we would welcome the opportunity to work with the Department to draft a model ordinance that will benefit everyone.

Sincerely,

Virginia Hayes, Curator, Ganna Walska Lotusland
Director at Large, American Public Gardens Association

Mike Iven, Director of Grounds and Facilities, Ganna Walska Lotusland

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