

**Colvin, Judith**

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**From:** mweo-bounces@water.ca.gov on behalf of Denise Caravelli  
[Denise.Caravelli@cityoftemecula.org]  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 27, 2008 1:31 PM  
**To:** mweo@water.ca.gov  
**Cc:** Steve Brown; Debbie Ubnoske  
**Subject:** [MWEO] Response to Proposed Changes to the State's Model WaterEfficient Landscape Ordinance  
**Attachments:** DWR Model Ordinance Comments.pdf

Please see the attached for comments regarding the proposed ordinance.

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# City of Temecula

## Planning Department

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March 27, 2008

Ms. Judy Colvin  
Office of Water Use Efficiency and Transfers  
California Department of Water Resources  
P.O. Box 942836  
Sacramento, CA 94236-001

Dear Ms. Colvin:

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the proposed changes to the State's Model Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance. While we support water conservation efforts across the State, the City has concerns with the proposed changes to the State's Model Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance and offers the following comments:

### **General Comments**

The Model Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance should not be crafted in such a way as to result in a negative impact to public spaces. Special attention is given to create attractive, pleasant and comfortable public spaces in order to improve the quality of life of a community. The City intends to make every effort to minimize excessive water use within these spaces; however, special design considerations may be necessary to create a comfortable and attractive public space, which may be inconsistent with the proposed Model Ordinance.

As indicated in the materials provided by the Department of Water Resources (DWR), the comment period ends on March 27, 2008; however, a public workshop will be conducted in southern California, on the same date as the comment period ends. Our staff will be attending this workshop and our comments may change depending on the information provided at the workshop. At a minimum, the DWR should allow for a 45 day comment period following completion of the March 27, 2008 public workshop.

### **Section 490.3**

Special consideration should be given to public parks that provide for active recreational needs of the community. Public parks with active recreational areas should be exempt from the seventy percent of the reference evapotranspiration (ET<sub>o</sub>) requirement. The request for this is due to the area of turf provided at public parks for recreational purposes. It will be nearly impossible to achieve seventy percent ET<sub>o</sub> in parks with turf for recreational purposes. Such a requirement could result in a loss of recreation use areas and the degradation of a quality of life aspect within the City and cities throughout California. It should be noted that the City of Temecula recently constructed an artificial turf sports park facility for public use. During the first season of operation, the sport fields experienced excessive heat as a result of the artificial turf fields. As a result, it has not yet been determined whether artificial turf sports fields are a viable alternative for natural turf sports fields, within the warmer inland area climates.

### **Section 492.6**

The requirement for a Water Efficiency Statement is an unnecessary requirement and will not result in beneficial information; whereas, requirements under Section 1 (General Project Information), Section 3 (Water Budget Calculations) and Section 4 (Hydrozone Information) effectively provide the necessary information to determine the water efficiency of the landscaped area.

### **Section 492.8 and 492.9**

The requirement for subsurface irrigation for irrigated areas within 24 inches from a non-permeable hardscape surface should only apply to areas adjacent to parking lots and/or streets, where overspray results in waste and urban run-off. This standard should not apply to all non-permeable hardscape surfaces - such a standard could negatively impact public parks, or public spaces where meandering pathways through landscaped areas are typically found. The intent should focus on reducing wasteful overspray and urban run-off, but allow for flexible landscape and irrigation designs in order to achieve such a standard.

### **Section 492.14 and 493.1**

Mandatory annual irrigation audits for 20% of all new, rehabilitated and existing landscapes greater than 2,500 square feet, is an unfunded mandate of extraordinary proportions and is unrealistic. This mandate places the burden on local jurisdictions to obtain permission to access private property for irrigation audit purposes, and to obtain water use information from the local retail water purveyor in order to determine compliance with the water efficient landscape ordinance. This is contrary to the standards that require second meters for landscaped areas greater than 5,000 square feet. For landscaped areas less than 5,000 square feet, the entire site's water use is combined within the water use information, resulting in skewed data, in which assumptions must be made to differentiate between irrigation water and water used for other purposes. Although we agree that audits for new and rehabilitated landscaped areas should be a component of an effective water efficient landscape policy, the twenty-percent rule seems arbitrary. Additionally, mandatory irrigation audits should not apply to single family residential users, rather, incentives should be established that allow for voluntary irrigation audits. If the DWR is insistent upon requiring mandatory irrigation audits for existing landscaped areas, then it would seem more appropriate to phase in audits to allow for water agencies and local jurisdictions to develop and implement retrofit or rehabilitation programs.

One solution to encourage more efficient use of irrigation water is to allow market forces to affect water use. A tiered rate structure that penalizes extreme high water users is a more appropriate and a palatable means of encouraging water conservation. Additionally, a portion of revenue generated from the highest tier rate payer, could be used for programs directed at rehabilitating existing non-water efficient landscaping.

I sincerely hope the Department of Water Resources considers the comments we have provided. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me via email at [Debbie.ubnoske@cityoftemecula](mailto:Debbie.ubnoske@cityoftemecula) or at (951) 694-6400.

Sincerely,



Debbie Ubnoske  
Director of Planning