



**CITY OF
LA MESA**

From
Bill Chopyk

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DATE: March 27, 2008

TO: Jody Colvin - Dept. of Water Resources
Office of Water Use Efficiency & Transfers

FAX NO: 916-651-9849

SUBJECT: Model Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance

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**CITY OF
LA MESA**
JEWEL of the HILLS

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

March 25, 2008

Jody Colvin
Department of Water Resources
Office of Water Use Efficiency and Transfers
P.O. Box 942836
Sacramento, CA 94236-0001

Re: Model Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance

Dear Jody Colvin:

The City of La Mesa, located in San Diego County, reviewed the Department of Water Resources Model Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance required by AB 1881. We agree that changes are needed to increase water use efficiency in landscape irrigation. We hope for a regional model landscape ordinance that that can be effectively implemented by the appropriate local water authorities.

While we support the concept of improved water conservation, a number of questions and issues came up in our review of the Model Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance, as follows:

1. The model ordinance does not differentiate between single-family houses and larger commercial, industrial and multi-family development projects. We do not review landscaping plans for single-family homes, but we do for larger projects.
2. With the water quality measures being implemented by the State and the RWQCB we are asking for more landscaping and permeable areas to minimize and treat runoff. With the costly and burdensome requirements of the new ordinance, developers and homeowners will look for ways to keep their landscape to a minimum so as not to have to hire a soils specialist, prepare plans and reports that may cost more than the initial landscape project, pay for and participate in annual audits, etc.
3. It is not clear in the model ordinance which jurisdiction or local agency will bear the responsibility and cost for implementing the water conservation process and requirements. The term "agency" is not defined within the ordinance, however the ordinance does state that it applies to all agencies, cities or counties and charter cities. With the City of La Mesa

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having a separate water agency (Helix Water District) is it implied that if Helix as the lead agency for enforcing this ordinance, adopts their own ordinance, the City is covered or does the City need to adopt Helix's Ordinance as well?

4. The ordinance would place conditions on the Building Department upon issuance of Certificates of Completion and Occupancy. Landscaping is the last thing to be installed and Certificates of Completion and Occupancy are typically granted before the landscaping has been completed.
5. Additional technical inspection services, technical studies such as a soils analysis report, water usage studies, and annual water audits would be required for projects. The City does not have the resources, expertise or the ability to provide these services and review these types of studies.

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the Model Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance proposed by the State of California Department of Water Resources. We look forward to seeing revisions which will incorporate comments and address the outlined concerns. You may contact Senior Planner Chris Jacobs in the Community Development Department at 619-667-1188 for any clarifications needed regarding our comments.

Sincerely,



William Chopyk
Planning & Development Services Director

cc: Mark Weston, Helix Water District
Sandra Kerl, City Manager
David E. Witt, Assistant City Manager/Community Development Director
Greg Humora, City Engineer/Public Works Director
Jessie Wu, Building Official

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