



**DATE:** May 23, 2017

**CATEGORY:** Public Hearing

**DEPT.:** Public Works

**TITLE:** **Rescinding the June 2016 Stage 1 Water Shortage Emergency Condition and Reinstating Normal Supply Conditions**

### **RECOMMENDATION**

Adopt a Resolution Rescinding the June 2016 Stage 1 Water Shortage Emergency Condition and Reinstating Normal Supply Conditions, to be read in title only, further reading waived (Attachment 1 to the Council report).

### **BACKGROUND**

The City of Mountain View operates a municipal water system serving approximately 18,000 customer connections. Mountain View purchases the majority of its water (approximately 86 percent) from the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC). Smaller volumes of water are purchased from the Santa Clara Valley Water District's (SCVWD) treated water system (7 percent), pumped from local groundwater wells (2 percent), and produced as recycled water by the Palo Alto Regional Water Quality Control Plant (RWQCP – 5 percent).

#### **Drought Response Timeline**

A Statewide drought began in 2012, and Governor Jerry Brown declared a state of emergency in January 2014 as drought conditions persisted into a third dry year. Over the subsequent three months, the City's wholesale suppliers, SFPUC and SCVWD, also declared drought emergencies and requested 10 percent and 20 percent water-use reductions, respectively. In April 2014, the City Council codified Mountain View's Water Shortage Contingency Plan and declared a Stage 1 water shortage. Staff increased drought response efforts and Citywide water use decreased by 13 percent (compared to 2013). In September 2014, the City Council declared a Stage 2 water shortage, responding to the Governor's mandate that urban water suppliers implement the stage of their shortage plan that limits landscape irrigation. Outdoor watering in Mountain View was limited to between 5:00 p.m. and 9:00 a.m., 15 minutes per day, three days per week.

As drought conditions continued to worsen through spring 2015, Governor Brown ordered the State Water Board to issue mandatory water-use reductions for all urban water suppliers in California. Mountain View's State-mandated reduction was 16 percent. The SFPUC maintained a voluntary 10 percent reduction and SCVWD increased its call for reduction from 20 percent to 30 percent. In response to these actions, Mountain View implemented a mandatory two-day-per-week watering schedule (with an optional 20 percent budget-based reduction alternative for irrigation customers) and appropriated nearly \$300,000 for drought response programs. Citywide water use during 2015 was 28 percent less than 2013 and the City met all water-use reduction targets. Water use by the City's operations (e.g., buildings, parks, golf course) was reduced 46 percent.

Following an above-normal rainy season in early 2016, water supply conditions improved and the State Water Board adopted a new methodology for calculating mandatory reductions, using local water supply information. Urban water suppliers, including Mountain View, "self-certified" new reduction targets based on the level of conservation necessary in 2019 if drought conditions persisted for three additional years; Mountain View self-certified a zero percent local water supply reduction. At this time, the City also reduced from a Stage 2 to a Stage 1 drought and promoted the SCVWD's three-day-per-week voluntary watering schedule. SCVWD moved from a 30 percent reduction request to 20 percent. During 2016, the City, its residents, and businesses continued to reduce water use, reaching 29 percent conservation, compared to 2013 water use. The current fiscal year shows a slight uptake in water use through March, but is still 25 percent less than 2013.

Precipitation during the 2016-17 rainy season has exceeded all of California's previous historical records, moving SFPUC to eliminate its systemwide call for voluntary conservation, Governor Brown to rescind the Statewide drought status, and the State Water Board to rescind its mandatory conservation requirements. The SCVWD is scheduled to discuss water supply at their May 18, 2017 meeting to decide whether to keep or change their current voluntary call for 20 percent conservation.

### Long-Term Conservation Regulations

In 2010, the State issued long-term water reduction requirements to reduce Statewide urban water use by 20 percent by the year 2020 ("20 by 2020"). Mountain View's analysis of and compliance with this requirement is published in the 2010 and 2015 Urban Water Management Plans. As of 2015, the City had already reached its 2020

water reduction goal. Presumably, current supply conditions will result in an increase in water use; however, staff expects to remain in compliance through 2020.

In anticipation of the soon-to-expire 20 by 2020, the Governor and State Water Board have issued new long-term conservation requirements, termed “Making Water Conservation a California Way of Life.” Agency-specific targets are expected to be finalized before 2020, and staff is working with regional partners to analyze potential impacts and implement the current requirements of this new mandate. Key components include:

- Continued agency (City) reporting of monthly water use to the State;
- Annual agency submittal of water distribution system audits;
- Development of new agency-specific water use targets based on efficient water use standards and agency-specific landscape water budgets;
- Adoption of new Statewide water-waste restrictions for normal water supply conditions.

Included in the fourth bullet above, the State Water Board has scheduled a public process to adopt permanent water-waste restrictions for normal water supply conditions. In the meantime, municipalities may continue enforcing the water-waste prohibitions from Executive Order B-37-16 (Attachment 2), if they choose. Most of the EO B-37-16 water-waste prohibitions overlap with those already codified by the City, and staff expects to update the City Code next year after the State has finalized its new water-waste restrictions for normal water supply conditions.

## ANALYSIS

Based on the actions of the SFPUC, Governor Brown, and the State Water Board, staff recommends rescinding the current Stage 1 water shortage in Mountain View and reinstating normal water supply conditions. A water shortage declaration is recommended when there is a reasonable probability of a supply shortage necessitating a demand reduction (City Code Sec. 35.28.3.1). Stage 1 is designed for supply shortages up to 10 percent, and at present there is no immediate supply shortage. However, long-term conservation and efficiency remain important and staff will continue efforts to promote long-term water use efficiency regardless of presence of the immediate presence a water shortage. Moving back into a “normal” water supply condition will

maintain all of the current restrictions on water-waste (Attachment 2), but will reduce outreach efforts related to short-term conservation.

Rescinding the current Stage 1 drought status and reinstating normal supply conditions would offer relief for the City's water customers who have far exceeded the requested water use reductions. Mountain View customers saved 13 percent in 2014, 28 percent in 2015, and 29 percent in 2016 compared with 2013. This is in comparison to conservation requests for 10, 16, and 0 percent reduction, respectively. Together, the City, residents, and businesses have saved nearly 2.8 billion gallons of water since the drought was initially declared by Governor Brown in January 2014.

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

Water Fund revenue would likely increase with increased water use, as would the City's costs for the purchase of additional water.

### **ALTERNATIVES**

1. Remain in the current Stage 1 Water Shortage Condition.
2. Provide other direction.

**PUBLIC NOTICING** – Agenda posting and publication in the *San Jose Post Record*.

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EF/TS/7/CAM  
703-05-23-17CR-E

- Attachments: 1. Resolution  
2. Water-Waste Prohibitions