



DATE: September 16, 2014

CATEGORY: Public Hearing

DEPT.: Public Works

TITLE: **Declaration of a Stage 2 Water Shortage Emergency Condition**

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt a Resolution Declaring the Existence of a Stage 2 Water Shortage Emergency Condition and Directing Implementation of Stage 2 Water Demand Reduction Measures.

BACKGROUND

The Public Works Department operates and maintains the City of Mountain View's potable water supply system. The City purchases approximately 87 percent of its potable water from the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC) and 9 percent from the Santa Clara Valley Water District (SCVWD); the remaining 4 percent is produced by the City's groundwater wells.

The City's potable water supply system serves approximately 97 percent of the homes and businesses in Mountain View; the California Water Company serves the remainder, which are located throughout the southern portion of the City. Residential water use accounts for 57 percent of the total system demand and City facilities (buildings, parks, and playing fields) account for approximately 5 percent of the total demand. The remainder is used by commercial, industrial, and large landscape irrigation accounts.

Current Water Supply Situation

On January 17, 2014, Governor Brown proclaimed a drought state of emergency due to critically low precipitation levels throughout California and called on urban water suppliers to implement their water shortage contingency plans. In response to the Governor's declaration and local water supply conditions, the SFPUC requested their customers reduce water consumption by 10 percent, and the SCVWD requested a 20 percent reduction.

To increase visibility of conservation programs, City staff expanded outreach to its customers through the City's website, social media outlets, and utility bill messaging. In addition, potable water irrigation of City parks and roadways was reduced by 10 percent. On April 1, 2014, the Council approved revisions to the Water Shortage Contingency Plan, delineating water use restrictions to be implemented for water supply shortages of up to 10 percent (Stage 1), up to 25 percent (Stage 2), up to 40 percent (Stage 3), and greater than 40 percent (Stage 4). The Council also adopted a resolution declaring a Stage 1 Water Shortage Emergency Condition.

Staff began monitoring monthly water use following the State drought declaration and conservation requests from water suppliers to determine the impact of outreach efforts. From February 1 through August 31, cumulative City-wide water consumption (all customers and City facilities) decreased 15 percent versus 2013. The City is meeting its water suppliers' requested conservation levels, reducing consumption of SFPUC water by 17 percent (versus requested conservation of 10 percent) and reducing consumption of SCVWD water by 22 percent (versus requested conservation of 20 percent).

Water Resources Control Board Actions

On July 15, 2014, due to the ongoing and severe nature of the drought, the California Water Resources Control Board (WRCB) approved new State-wide water use prohibitions to prevent water waste and increase conservation. The new prohibitions are listed below and apply except where necessary to address an immediate health and safety need or to comply with a condition in a State or Federal issued permit:

1. The application of potable water to outdoor landscapes in a manner that causes runoff such that water flows onto adjacent property, nonirrigated areas, private and public walkways, roadways, parking lots, or structures.
2. The use of a hose that dispenses potable water to wash a motor vehicle, except where the hose is fitted with a shut-off nozzle or device attached to it that causes it to cease dispensing water immediately when not in use.
3. The application of potable water to driveways and sidewalks.
4. The use of potable water in a fountain or other decorative water feature except where the water is part of a recirculating system.

The WRCB also required urban water suppliers to implement the stage of its Water Shortage Contingency Plan "that imposes mandatory restrictions on outdoor irrigation of ornamental landscapes or turf with potable water," and called upon water suppliers

to educate customers and employees about water conservation and work to increase local water supplies.

Current Water Use Restrictions in Mountain View

The City's standard water use restrictions, which are in place at all times, include the following prohibitions on water use:

- Wasting water from broken or defective water systems. Time allowed for repairs is 10 days.
- Using water in a manner that results in flooding or runoff into the gutter.
- Cleaning hard-surfaced areas with a hose unless equipped with a shutoff valve.
- Washing vehicles with a hose unless equipped with a shutoff valve.
- Serving water in a restaurant, except upon request.
- Operating single-pass cooling systems.

The Stage 1 drought declaration adopted on April 1, 2014 increased the City's outreach in an effort to increase conservation.

ANALYSIS

To meet the WRCB's requirement that the City implement the stage of its water contingency plan that places mandatory restrictions on outdoor irrigation, staff recommends that the City Council declare a Stage 2 water shortage emergency condition and implement the corresponding water use restrictions. The Stage 2 water shortage condition is designed to reduce consumption up to 25 percent and will implement the water use restrictions listed below. In some cases, a WRCB restriction is more stringent than a City Stage 2 restriction, and those cases are noted. In cases where the WRCB restriction is more stringent, residents are required to follow the WRCB restriction.

City Stage 2 restrictions include:

- Time allowed to repair broken or defective water systems is reduced to five days.

- Washing paved or hard surfaces, except by bucket or for health and safety reasons. *(The WRCB regulation prohibits the application of potable water to driveways and sidewalks.)*
- At-home vehicle washing, except by bucket.
- Watering or irrigating landscapes is prohibited:
 - Between 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. (except by bucket, hose, or for system repair).
 - More than one to three days per week as determined by the Public Works Director (except for system repair).
 - More than 15 minutes per day (except for drip irrigation or for system repair).
 - During rain events.
- Using potable water to fill decorative water features, except to sustain aquatic life. *(The WRCB regulation prohibits the use of potable water in a fountain or other decorative water feature, except where the water is part of a recirculating system.)*
- Using nonwater-conserving dishwashing spray valves in restaurants.
- Providing new linens to hotel guests without offering reuse options.
- Constructing or installing and operating new commercial car washes and commercial laundry systems that do not use water-recirculating technologies.
- Using potable water for construction needs when recycled water is readily available.

Because the City is currently meeting the conservation targets established by our water suppliers, the recommended allowable watering frequency is three days per week. If additional conservation is required due to ongoing dry conditions, staff will consider reducing the allowable frequency.

To conserve water and set an example of conservation, all City water features, including the Civic Center Plaza fountain, were shut down in early September in recognition of ongoing water supply concerns.

Staff believes implementation of the Stage 2 restrictions will not place an inordinate burden on City water customers and will allow the City to continue to meet its water suppliers' ongoing conservation requests and State requirements. The WRCB's new restrictions are in effect for 270 days unless extended or deemed no longer necessary due to improved water supply conditions. Staff will continue to monitor State actions and requirements and recommend appropriate adjustments to City water use restrictions.

Enforcement

The City has two full-time staff working on water conservation, with an emphasis on education and outreach. City staff is receiving ongoing public feedback regarding water waste through its water conservation hotline, *Ask MV*, and e-mails. Staff investigates complaints through field visits, and if violations are identified, provides notification of and information regarding how to correct the violation (in person or via door hangers), and information regarding water conservation opportunities.

If the Stage 2 declaration is adopted, staff will continue to monitor water use practices, provide written warnings regarding City Code and State law violations as warranted to customers, and provide education regarding water-saving programs. Public Works staff may issue administrative citations for City Code violations in cases of repeat or flagrant water waste. In addition, the State regulations authorize fines of up to Five Hundred Dollars (\$500) per day for violation of the State's water use prohibitions.

Next Steps

Staff will use the City's website, social media outlets, utility bill messaging, KMVT, and local advertising (newspaper, etc.) to increase awareness of and identify programs that will help customers comply with the new WRCB and Stage 2 restrictions. Staff will also reach out to the Chamber of Commerce, Central Business Association, and large water users. We will continue to monitor the effectiveness of the new restrictions and determine the need for additional measures to comply with existing and potentially more aggressive conservation water-saving goals from the SFPUC and SCVWD.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact from declaring a Stage 2 water shortage emergency. The City's water supply contract with SFPUC includes a minimum purchase requirement, which has been reduced by 10 percent for the current fiscal year as a result of the drought.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Approve the Stage 2 water shortage declaration and provide direction regarding revisions to the Stage 2 prohibitions.
2. Do not approve the Stage 2 water shortage declaration. Provide direction regarding alternative strategies to comply with WRCB regulations.

PUBLIC NOTICING

Agenda posting. The public hearing notice was published in the *San Jose Post Record* and a courtesy notice was published in the *Mountain View Voice*.

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GAH/MF/3/CAM
761-09-16-14CR-E

Attachment: 1. Resolution