



Making Water Conservation a California Way of Life

Using Water Wisely To Create a More Secure and Resilient Future

THE CHALLENGE

Water powers California's economy, sustains our communities, and nourishes our environment. But we can no longer take it for granted. Climate change means longer dry periods and reduced snowpack. We're feeling these effects already, especially in light of the recent, historic drought, and they will intensify in the coming years. To meet the needs of our growing economy and population, we must make wise use of this precious resource and scale up common sense conservation and efficiency measures.

THE OPPORTUNITY

Using water more efficiently offers an enormous opportunity to create a more secure and resilient future for California. California communities have significant potential to reduce water demand through conservation and efficiency - far greater than any new supply option at a much lower cost. Governor Brown's Executive Order B-37-16 calls on California to make conservation a way of life. The Order directs the State Water Resources Control Board and Department of Water Resources (DWR) to develop water use targets for urban water suppliers that reflect local conditions and go beyond existing requirements. DWR is also tasked with helping cities prepare for future droughts, and ensuring the needs of vulnerable communities are proactively addressed.

THE GOVERNOR'S DIRECTIVE IS ACHIEVABLE, BENEFICIAL, AND ESSENTIAL

California can make water conservation a way of life. During the drought, Californians slashed water use by nearly 25%, and a recent Field poll found that 75 percent of voters believe it is important to continue to

25%

AVERAGE

reduction in water use by Californians during the drought

75%

OF VOTERS

believe it is important to continue to reduce water use

reduce water use. We can and must build on this momentum. California is a global leader in energy efficiency. We can do the same for water by setting targets and developing and deploying innovative technologies and practices. Implementing a clear and workable water conservation and

efficiency program now will ensure California communities, businesses, and ecosystems have the water they need to thrive.

Saving water saves money and energy. Water conservation and efficiency are the fastest, most affordable, and environmentally-sound way to meet water needs. There are easy and cost-effective steps cities can take to increase efficiency, like fixing leaks and replacing lawns with native plants. Saving water also saves energy, reduces greenhouse gas emissions, and defers or eliminates the need for costly new infrastructure. By using only the water we need outdoors, we can also reduce polluted runoff, protecting the water quality of lakes, streams, and our coastal ocean. Improving urban water conservation will reduce pressure on the state's water supply, promoting more reliability and resilience.

Preparing now will help avoid future emergencies. California is facing more frequent, severe, and longer-lasting droughts. We can begin preparing today rather than simply reacting to each emergency. Already, some California communities have lost water entirely, threatening the health and safety of residents and costing taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars in emergency relief. Improved drought planning will help us anticipate and prepare for future shortages.

HOW IT WORKS

The urban conservation framework is based on local control and local conditions. Each water supplier will have a water use target that takes microclimates and land use into account. Targets will be based on strengthened standards in three areas: indoor residential water use, outdoor irrigation for all customers, and water distribution system leaks. Once the local target has been set, water suppliers will decide how to meet it. There will also be requirements to improve data collection and water-use efficiency for commercial, industrial, and institutional water users.

Some water suppliers are already using water budgets to help their customers use water more efficiently. The data and tools are available and can be used across the state to develop an effective and equitable system for improving water conservation and efficiency.



The Governor's directive to make conservation a way of life is good for the state and all Californians. It strongly supports California's continued economic growth, creates greater water reliability, and ensures we make the most of our precious water resources.



Water use targets will be based on strengthened standards in these three areas:



indoor residential water use



outdoor irrigation



loss through leaks

These new standards are fair and flexible. They recognize that different communities have different water needs and savings potential, but require everyone to do their part to ensure there is enough water to go around. They go beyond the existing 20 percent by 2020 requirement from the Water Conservation Act of 2009 (Senate Bill X7-7), because the latest research demonstrates that our potential for affordably realizing efficiency gains is much greater than it was when that legislation was enacted 7 years ago.

Simultaneously, DWR is developing new common, statewide drought planning standards so that plans can be quickly utilized during this and future droughts. The state will work with local agencies to create plans for our most vulnerable populations to prevent water emergencies and support community resilience.

