SWEETWATER SPRINGS WATER DISTRICT

TO: Board of Directors **AGENDA NO. V-B**

FROM: Steve Mack, General Manager

Meeting Date: April 2, 2015

SUBJECT: POTENTIAL REVISIONS TO STAGE I OF THE DISTRICT'S WATER SHORTAGE CONTINGENCY PLAN

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Discuss potential revisions to Stage 1 of the District's water shortage contingency plan and give direction to the General Manager.

FISCAL IMPACT: Reduced water sales results in lower water sales revenues for the District - a 20% reduction in water sales done for one year reduces District water sales revenues by $140,000.

DISCUSSION:

The District declared Stage I of the Water Shortage Contingency Plan at the August 2014 Board meeting. This was done at the direction of the California State Water Resources Control Board (State Board) which was responding to the then historical statewide drought situation and was (and is still) aiming for a 20% reduction is overall water use. That action included the following measures.

- The application of potable water to any driveway or sidewalk.
- Using potable water to water outdoor landscapes in a manner that causes runoff.
- Using potable water to wash a motor vehicle, unless the hose has a shut-off nozzle.
- Using potable water in a fountain or decorative water feature, unless the water is recirculated.

Staff has also been reporting District water use to the State Board staff online. Since the beginning of the reporting period, the District has reduced its water production by 15% compared to the same time in 2013 (which is the State Board standard). The State Board order was due to expire in April and the hoped for winter rains and snow (in the Sierras) haven't happened to a necessary amount anywhere in the state - we're still in a drought and the precipitation season is running out.

Our area did have substantial rains in December which produced minor flooding in the Russian River on December 12 and major flooding in side creeks, but our overall rainfall was still less than desired. The rest of the state fared much worse in many localities, particularly in the Sierras and the drought is still on with no relief expected this year.

On March 17, the State Board met to take action on what to do for the coming year. The direction from the State Board coming out of that meeting was that the

conservation goal of 20% reduction in water use has been continued, the Stage I restrictions from last year are still required and the following restrictions are added:

- Urban water suppliers must now limit the number of days per week that customers can irrigate outdoors. The limit must either be specified in their drought contingency plans; or if their plan contains no specific limit, irrigation is limited to no more than two days per week.
- Irrigating turf or ornamental landscapes during and 48 hours following measurable precipitation is prohibited.
- Water agencies will also be required to notify customers when they are aware of leaks that are within the customer's control.
- Restaurants and other food service establishments can only serve water to customers on request; and
- Operators of hotels and motels must provide guests with the option of choosing not to have towels and linens laundered daily and prominently display notice of this option.

The State Board media release explaining their action is attached as Attachment A. We have received no other formal direction from the State Board; perhaps we are just supposed to act on the directions of the media release.

The District's water shortage contingency plan is summarized in Table A-2 (from the 2010 Urban Water Management Plan). A 20% reduction falls in the Stage I category. The District can add or subtract water conserving elements as the situation dictates. We are still in a voluntary stage; mandatory water use restrictions are not called out in the plan.

Table A-2
Emergency Response Stages and Reduction Goals

Shortage Condition	Stage	Customer Reduction Goal	Type of Rationing Program
15 – 25%	I	25%	Voluntary
26 – 35%	II	35%	Mandatory
36 – 50%	III	50% or >	Mandatory

Of the new restrictions:

- The District currently notifies customers as soon as we are aware of a possible customer leak whether it is because someone notices running water or the water bill has a steep increase indicating a leak.
- Prohibiting outside watering within two days of rainfall - that's not a real issue in our District but we can notify customers of this new restriction.
- The two restrictions regarding restaurants and lodging, I believe are more within the purview of Sonoma County - the District does not have the police power to enforce that direction. It also raises the issue of the regional water conservation program - we all shouldn't be doing this differently. I have emailed Supervisor Carrillo about this issue but have not received a response.

- The most problematic of the restrictions is the one allowing only two days per week outside watering. I don't know of a good approach to doing this - both which two days are allowed and how does it get enforced? We may get more direction on this from the State Board, or advice from a regional program, but at this time the honor system with some statements about what our expectations are, with District staff being on the lookout, may be the best approach. Suggestions/ideas are welcome.

The Drought will continue until we get a rainy season statewide that fills reservoirs. It doesn't look like that is happening this rainy season. Until it does, the State will continue to direct these restrictions regardless of our local situation and we must respond in a responsible manner. I am hoping for assistance from a regional program but I have seen no evidence of that yet.

Media Release

State Water Board Expands and Extends Emergency Water Conservation Regulation

For Immediate Release
March 17, 2015

Contact: George Kostyrko
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SACRAMENTO -- As California enters a fourth year of severe drought, the State Water Resources Control Board Tuesday adopted an expanded emergency regulation to safeguard the state's remaining water supplies.

"We are experiencing the lowest snowpack and the driest January in recorded history, and communities around the state are already suffering severely from the prior three years of drought," said State Water Board Chair Felicia Marcus. "If the drought continues through next winter and we do not conserve more -- the consequences could be even more catastrophic than they already are. Today's action is just a tune-up and a reminder to act, and we will consider more significant actions in the weeks to come."

While communities and water suppliers have saved substantial amounts of water since the water conservation emergency regulation was first adopted in July 2014, there are many more opportunities for Californians to conserve in even greater amounts. The expanded emergency regulation captures some of these opportunities while continuing to give urban water suppliers flexibility to take actions that reflect their local conditions as long as they meet the minimum requirements. The State Water Board strongly encourages water suppliers to do much more than the minimum required by the regulation.

Today's action incorporates lessons learned from implementation of the emergency regulation approved in 2014 and feedback from urban water suppliers and the public.

Prohibited Water Use

Under today's action, the prohibitions on potable water use, first adopted in 2014, will continue, and new prohibitions will go into effect. All Californian's are now prohibited from:

- washing down sidewalks and driveways;
- watering outdoor landscapes in a manner that causes excess runoff;
- washing a motor vehicle with a hose, unless the hose is fitted with a shut-off nozzle;
- operating a fountain or decorative water feature, unless the water is part of a recirculating system; and

- irrigating turf or ornamental landscapes during and 48 hours following measurable precipitation (new).

(New) Prohibitions affecting commercial businesses include:

- restaurants and other food service establishments can only serve water to customers on request; and
- operators of hotels and motels must provide guests with the option of choosing not to have towels and linens laundered daily and prominently display notice of this option.

Water Agency Requirements

The biggest change for urban water suppliers is the creation of a floor, or minimum standard, for outdoor irrigation restrictions. Urban water suppliers must now limit the number of days per week that customers can irrigate outdoors. The limit must either be specified in their drought contingency plans; or if their plan contains no specific limit, irrigation is limited to no more than two days per week.

Water agencies will also be required to notify customers when they are aware of leaks that are within the customer's control. Finally, monthly reporting requirements will be expanded to include the limit on days for outdoor irrigation and a description of compliance and enforcement efforts.

For smaller water suppliers, the expanded regulation clarifies that if they choose to implement alternate mandatory measures, in lieu of limiting outdoor irrigation to twice a week, those measures should be designed to achieve a 20 percent reduction in water consumption.

Local agencies can fine property owners up to $500 a day for failure to implement conservation requirements and the State Water Board can issue cease and desist orders against water agencies that don't impose mandatory conservation measures upon their retail customers. Water agencies that violate cease and desist orders are subject to civil liability of up to $10,000 a day.

"In a drought this severe, we need to think differently about our daily water use, and need to sacrifice emerald green lawns and other water use luxuries," Marcus said. "At a time when hundreds of thousands of acres of farmland lie fallow, thousands are out of work, communities are running out of water, and fish and wildlife are devastated, and when locally stored urban water supplies are shrinking, we need to step up the pace of conservation. Water agencies should be motivating customers to take even more responsibility for the amount of water used in homes, backyards, businesses, parks and everywhere else."

Following Board adoption, the regulation will be submitted to the Office of Administrative Law, which has 10 days to approve or deny the regulation. If approved by the Office of Administrative Law, the regulation will take effect immediately and remain in effect for 270 days from that date.

For more information, please visit the Emergency Water Conservation website.

Governor Brown has called on all Californians to reduce their water use by 20 percent and prevent water waste – visit SaveOurH2O.org and SaveOurWater.com to find out how everyone can do their part, and visit Drought.CA.Gov to learn more about how California is dealing with the effects of the drought.

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