

Executive Department

State of California

**EXECUTIVE ORDER B-37-16  
MAKING WATER CONSERVATION A CALIFORNIA WAY OF LIFE**

**WHEREAS** California has suffered through a severe multi-year drought that has threatened the water supplies of communities and residents, devastated agricultural production in many areas, and harmed fish, animals and their environmental habitats; and

**WHEREAS** Californians responded to the drought by conserving water at unprecedented levels, reducing water use in communities by 23.9% between June 2015 and March 2016 and saving enough water during this period to provide 6.5 million Californians with water for one year; and

**WHEREAS** severe drought conditions persist in many areas of the state despite recent winter precipitation, with limited drinking water supplies in some communities, diminished water for agricultural production and environmental habitat, and severely-depleted groundwater basins; and

**WHEREAS** drought conditions may persist in some parts of the state into 2017 and beyond, as warmer winter temperatures driven by climate change reduce water supply held in mountain snowpack and result in drier soil conditions; and

**WHEREAS** these ongoing drought conditions and our changing climate require California to move beyond temporary emergency drought measures and adopt permanent changes to use water more wisely and to prepare for more frequent and persistent periods of limited water supply; and

**WHEREAS** increasing long-term water conservation among Californians, improving water use efficiency within the state's communities and agricultural production, and strengthening local and regional drought planning are critical to California's resilience to drought and climate change; and

**WHEREAS** these activities are prioritized in the California Water Action Plan, which calls for concrete, measurable actions that "Make Conservation a California Way of Life" and "Manage and Prepare for Dry Periods" in order to improve use of water in our state.

**NOW, THEREFORE, I, EDMUND G. BROWN JR.,** Governor of the State of California, in accordance with the authority vested in me by the Constitution and statutes of the State of California, in particular California Government Code sections 8567 and 8571, do hereby issue this Executive Order, effective immediately.

**IT IS HEREBY ORDERED THAT:**

The orders and provisions contained in my January 17, 2014 Emergency Proclamation, my April 25, 2014 Emergency Proclamation, Executive Orders B-26-14, B-28-14, B-29-15, and B-36-15 remain in full force and in effect except as modified herein.

State agencies shall update temporary emergency water restrictions and transition to permanent, long-term improvements in water use by taking the following actions.

**USE WATER MORE WISELY**

1. The State Water Resources Control Board (Water Board) shall, as soon as practicable, adjust emergency water conservation regulations through the end of January 2017 in recognition of the differing water supply conditions across the state. To prepare for the possibility of another dry winter, the Water Board shall also develop, by January 2017, a proposal to achieve a mandatory reduction in potable urban water usage that builds off of the mandatory 25% reduction called for in Executive Order B-29-15 and lessons learned through 2016.
2. The Department of Water Resources (Department) shall work with the Water Board to develop new water use targets as part of a permanent framework for urban water agencies. These new water use targets shall build upon the existing state law requirements that the state achieve a 20% reduction in urban water usage by 2020. (Senate Bill No. 7 (7th Extraordinary Session, 2009-2010).) These water use targets shall be customized to the unique conditions of each water agency, shall generate more statewide water conservation than existing requirements, and shall be based on strengthened standards for:
  - a. Indoor residential per capita water use;
  - b. Outdoor irrigation, in a manner that incorporates landscape area, local climate, and new satellite imagery data;
  - c. Commercial, industrial, and institutional water use; and
  - d. Water lost through leaks.

The Department and Water Board shall consult with urban water suppliers, local governments, environmental groups, and other partners to develop these water use targets and shall publicly issue a proposed draft framework by January 10, 2017.

3. The Department and the Water Board shall permanently require urban water suppliers to issue a monthly report on their water usage, amount of conservation achieved, and any enforcement efforts.

## **ELIMINATE WATER WASTE**

4. The Water Board shall permanently prohibit practices that waste potable water, such as:
  - Hosing off sidewalks, driveways and other hardscapes;
  - Washing automobiles with hoses not equipped with a shut-off nozzle;
  - Using non-recirculated water in a fountain or other decorative water feature;
  - Watering lawns in a manner that causes runoff, or within 48 hours after measurable precipitation; and
  - Irrigating ornamental turf on public street medians.
5. The Water Board and the Department shall direct actions to minimize water system leaks that waste large amounts of water. The Water Board, after funding projects to address health and safety, shall use loans from the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund to prioritize local projects that reduce leaks and other water system losses.
6. The Water Board and the Department shall direct urban and agricultural water suppliers to accelerate their data collection, improve water system management, and prioritize capital projects to reduce water waste. The California Public Utilities Commission shall order investor-owned water utilities to accelerate work to minimize leaks.
7. The California Energy Commission shall certify innovative water conservation and water loss detection and control technologies that also increase energy efficiency.

## **STRENGTHEN LOCAL DROUGHT RESILIENCE**

8. The Department shall strengthen requirements for urban Water Shortage Contingency Plans, which urban water agencies are required to maintain. These updated requirements shall include adequate actions to respond to droughts lasting at least five years, as well as more frequent and severe periods of drought. While remaining customized according to local conditions, the updated requirements shall also create common statewide standards so that these plans can be quickly utilized during this and any future droughts.
9. The Department shall consult with urban water suppliers, local governments, environmental groups, and other partners to update requirements for Water Shortage Contingency Plans. The updated draft requirements shall be publicly released by January 10, 2017.

10. For areas not covered by a Water Shortage Contingency Plan, the Department shall work with counties to facilitate improved drought planning for small water suppliers and rural communities.

## **IMPROVE AGRICULTURAL WATER USE EFFICIENCY AND DROUGHT PLANNING**

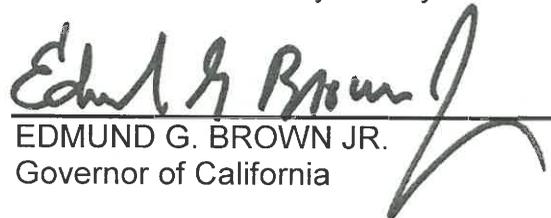
11. The Department shall work with the California Department of Food and Agriculture to update existing requirements for Agricultural Water Management Plans to ensure that these plans identify and quantify measures to increase water efficiency in their service area and to adequately plan for periods of limited water supply.
12. The Department shall permanently require the completion of Agricultural Water Management Plans by water suppliers with over 10,000 irrigated acres of land.
13. The Department, together with the California Department of Food and Agriculture, shall consult with agricultural water suppliers, local governments, agricultural producers, environmental groups, and other partners to update requirements for Agricultural Water Management Plans. The updated draft requirements shall be publicly released by January 10, 2017.

The Department, Water Board and California Public Utilities Commission shall develop methods to ensure compliance with the provisions of this Executive Order, including technical and financial assistance, agency oversight, and, if necessary, enforcement action by the Water Board to address non-compliant water suppliers.

This Executive Order is not intended to, and does not, create any rights or benefits, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or in equity, against the State of California, its agencies, departments, entities, officers, employees, or any other person.

**I FURTHER DIRECT** that as soon as hereafter possible, this order be filed in the Office of the Secretary of State and that widespread publicity and notice be given of this order.

**IN WITNESS WHEREOF** I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of California to be affixed this 9th day of May 2016.

  
EDMUND G. BROWN JR.  
Governor of California

**ATTEST:**

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ALEX PADILLA  
Secretary of State



# Media Release

## State Water Board Adopts 'Stress Test' Approach to Water Conservation Regulation

**For Immediate Release**  
**May 18, 2016**

**Contact: George Kostyrko**  
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**SACRAMENTO** – The State Water Resources Control Board today adopted a statewide water conservation approach that replaces the prior percentage reduction-based water conservation standard with a localized “stress test” approach that mandates urban water suppliers act now to ensure at least a three year supply of water to their customers under drought conditions.

Recognizing persistent yet less severe drought conditions throughout California, the newly adopted [emergency regulation](#) will replace the Feb. 2 emergency water conservation regulation that set specific water conservation benchmarks at the state level for each urban water supplier. Today’s adopted regulation, which will be in effect through January 2017, requires locally developed conservation standards based upon each agency’s specific circumstances.

These standards require local water agencies to ensure a three-year supply assuming three more dry years like the ones the state experienced from 2012 to 2015. Water agencies that would face shortages under three additional dry years will be required to meet a conservation standard equal to the amount of shortage. For example, if a water agency projects it would have a 10 percent supply shortfall, their mandatory conservation standard would be 10 percent.

“Drought conditions are far from over, but have improved enough that we can step back from our unprecedented top-down target setting,” said State Water Board Chair Felicia Marcus. “We’ve moved to a ‘show us the water” approach, that allows local agencies to demonstrate that they are prepared for three more lousy water years. This reporting will show us what agencies plan to do, and how they do, throughout the year. Trust, but verify. In the meantime, we’ll be watching and prepared to come back with the 25 percent state mandate early next year if necessary, which we hope it won't be.”

All of the projections and calculations used to determine the new conservation standards will be disclosed publicly. They will include information provided by regional water distribution agencies (wholesale suppliers) about how regional supplies (including imported water, recycled water, groundwater, storm water, and desalinated water) would fare during three



additional dry years. The regulation requires urban water supplier to continue their monthly conservation reporting.

The adopted regulation also keeps in place the specific prohibitions against certain water uses. Those prohibitions include watering down a sidewalk with a hose instead of using a broom or a brush, or overwatering a landscape to where water is running off the lawn, over a sidewalk and into the gutter. Prohibitions directed to the hospitality industry also remain in place. Prohibitions against [home owners associations](#) taking action against homeowners during a declared drought remain as well.

The adopted regulation is the result of feedback from urban water suppliers, a public workshop on [April 20](#) to receive input on conservation needs through the summer and fall, and lessons learned since the Water Board first adopted drought emergency water conservation regulations.

“El Nino didn’t save us, but this winter gave us some relief,” said Chair Marcus. “It’s a reprieve though, not a hall pass, for much if not all of California. We need to keep conserving, and work on more efficient practices, like keeping lawns on a water diet or transitioning away from them. We don’t want to cry wolf, but we can’t put our heads in the sand either.”

As directed by Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr. in [Executive Order B-37-16](#), the Board will separately take action to make some of the requirements of the regulation permanent. The new emergency conservation standards take effect in June and remain in effect until the end of January 2017. More information on the Board action today can be found [here](#).

## Background

In his April 1, 2015 [Executive Order](#), Gov. Brown mandated a 25 percent water use reduction by users of urban water supplies across California. In May 2015, the State Water Board adopted an emergency regulation requiring an immediate 25 percent reduction in overall potable urban water use. The regulation used a sliding scale for setting conservation standards, so that communities that had already reduced their R-GPCD through past conservation had lower mandates than those that had not made such gains since the last major drought.

On Feb. 2, 2016, based on Gov. Brown’s [November 2015 Executive Order](#), the State Water Board approved an updated and extended emergency regulation to continue mandatory reductions through October, unless revised as they were today. The extended regulation took into account some factors that influence water use: climate, population growth and significant investments in new local, drought-resilient water supplies such as wastewater reuse and desalination. The February Board action reduced the maximum conservation standard to below 25 percent, but above 20 percent, depending on how credits were applied.

Since July 2014, the State Water Board has been tracking water conservation for each of the state’s larger urban water suppliers (those with more than 3,000 connections) on a monthly basis. Compliance with individual water supplier conservation requirements is based on

cumulative savings. Cumulative tracking means that conservation savings will be added together from one month to the next and compared to the amount of water used during the same months in 2013. Under the new reporting structure, water districts will continue to [report water use](#), but their conservation standard will be based on any shortfall in projected supply over three drought years.

With nearly 1.3 million acre-feet of water conserved from June 2015 through March 2016, the state saved an impressive amount of water during the worst of the drought months. Statewide cumulative savings from June 2015 to March 2016 totaled 23.9 percent compared with the same months in 2013. During the last month of reporting, statewide average water use was 66 residential gallons per capita per day (R-GPCD) for March 2016.

On May 9, Governor Brown [issued an Executive Order](#) directing actions aimed at using water wisely, reducing water waste, and improving water use efficiency for the years and decades ahead. The Executive Order, in part, directed the State Water Board to extend the emergency regulations for urban water conservation through the end of January 2017.

California has been dealing with the effects of an unprecedented drought. To learn about all the actions the state has taken to manage our water system and cope with the impacts of the drought, visit [Drought.CA.Gov](#). Every Californian should take steps to conserve water. Find out how at [SaveOurWater.com](#). While saving water, it is important to properly water trees. Find out how at [www.saveourwater.com/trees](#). In addition to many effective local programs, state-funded turf removal and toilet replacement rebates are also available. Information and rebate applications can be found at: [www.saveourwaterrebates.com/](#).

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