

February 3, 2017

The Honorable Felicia Marcus, Chair and Board Members
c/o Jeanine Townsend, Clerk to the Board
State Water Resources Control Board
1001 I Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

Via email: commentletters@waterboards.ca.gov

Subject: February 8, 2017, State Water Resources Control Board Item 9 regarding the Re-adoption of Drought Related Emergency Regulations for Urban Water Conservation to Implement Executive Order B-29-15, B-36-15 and B-37-16

Dear Chair Marcus and Board Members:

The purpose of this letter is on behalf of the Eastern Municipal Water District (EMWD) to convey our opposition to the re-adoption of the Drought Related Emergency Regulations for Urban Water Conservation (Emergency Regulations) being considered by the State Water Resources Control Board at its upcoming February 8, 2017 meeting. Transmitted with this letter is a resolution of the Board of Directors of EMWD supporting this position. We make this request based upon the extraordinary improvement in water supply conditions throughout the state and within our region, and the need to maintain credibility with the public to ensure their support and responsiveness during future water supply emergencies.

Eastern Municipal Water District (EMWD) is a full-service water, wastewater and recycled water agency serving nearly 800,000 residents throughout Riverside County. For several decades, EMWD has proactively established itself as a statewide leader in water-use efficiency. During California's recent drought emergency, EMWD swiftly responded by moving through the stages of its Water Shortage Contingency Plan to encourage and incentivize customers to reduce demand. Our customers responded exceptionally well, and maintained cumulative demand reduction of 18 percent from June 2015 to December 2016, when compared to 2013. This significant and sustained demand reduction is in addition to EMWD's conservation achievements prior to 2013. Overall, EMWD's conservation and water use efficiency efforts have resulted in an extraordinary per capita demand reduction of over 40 percent from peak

Board of Directors

~~David J. Sawson, President Ronald W. Sullivan, Vice President Joseph J. Kuebler, CPA, Treasurer Philip E. Paolo Randy A. Record~~

2270 Trumble Road • P.O. Box 8300 • Perris, CA 92572-8300

T 951.928.3777 • F 951.928.6177 www.emwd.org

February 8, 2017, State Water Resources Control Board Item 9

February 3, 2017

Page 2

usage in 2001. Moreover, these significant demand reductions have been maintained even after EMWD's "stress test" under the existing State Board Emergency Regulations resulted in a conservation standard of zero in June of 2016.

Hydrologic and water supply conditions have significantly improved for the vast majority of the state, with snowfall and precipitation approaching record levels and reservoir storage throughout northern and southern California showing strong recovery. Additionally, ample supplies to meet full service demands are available from our imported water supplier, the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD), with MWD's surface and groundwater storage rapidly increasing. Local water supply conditions within EMWD's service area have also markedly improved, with active groundwater replenishment occurring in local groundwater basins and EMWD's recycled water storage approaching capacity.

As a result of the state-wide, regional and local improvements in supply conditions combined with increases in sustainable water use efficiency levels among agencies throughout the state, it is clear that the water supply emergency declared in 2014 is now over. Although southern California is arguably in the final stages of drought, water supply and dry-year storage conditions have improved so dramatically that the present circumstances clearly do not rise to the level of an emergency.

To maintain trust and support among the public, it is imperative that state and local water managers acknowledge and accurately communicate improved water supply conditions and take actions, as appropriate. Our goal is to ensure that members of the public continue to trust our agencies and remain willing to support needed investments in sustainable supply strategies, long-term water use efficiency, and extraordinary conservation during future water supply emergencies. As such, we are urging the Governor and State Board to candidly acknowledge that the statewide water supply emergency is over, and to allow the current Emergency Regulations to lapse on February 28, 2017 with no further action at this time.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of our comments.

Sincerely,



Paul D. Jones II, P.E.

General Manager

Enclosure: EMWD Resolution No. 2017-007

RESOLUTION NO. 2017-007

**RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF EASTERN
MUNICIPAL WATER DISTRICT TO ENCOURAGE THE
GOVERNOR AND STATE WATER RESOURCES CONTROL
BOARD TO END THE DROUGHT EMERGENCY STATUS AND
CURRENT EMERGENCY CONSERVATION REGULATION**

WHEREAS, on January 17, 2014, Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr. declared a drought State of Emergency in California due to severe drought conditions (Proclamation No. 1-17-2014); and

WHEREAS, on May 5, 2015, the State Water Resources Control Board (the "State Water Board") adopted Article 22.5: Drought Emergency Water Conservation Emergency Regulation ("Emergency Conservation Regulation") that included a mandatory statewide reduction in potable water use and conservation standards for urban water suppliers; and

WHEREAS, on May 9, 2016, Governor Brown issued Executive Order B-37-16 directing the State Water Board to: 1) adjust the Emergency Conservation Regulation through the end of January 2017 in recognition of differing water supply conditions across the state; and 2) to prepare for the possibility of another dry winter, develop, by January 2017, a proposal to achieve a mandatory reduction in potable water usage that builds off of the mandatory 25 percent reduction in previous Executive Orders and lessons learned through 2016; and

WHEREAS, on May 18, 2016, the State Water Board enacted a revised version of the Emergency Conservation Regulation that allowed for a self-certification of supply reliability to determine the urban water supplier's conservation standard; and

WHEREAS, the self-certification conducted pursuant to Section 864.5 of Article 22.5, demonstrated that the Eastern Municipal Water District (EMWD) has adequate supplies to meet projected demands under the conditions outlined in Section 864.5 for all three dry years; and

WHEREAS, precipitation, snowpack water content and reservoir levels statewide have significantly improved in the 2017 water year, which only improves the Emergency Conservation Regulation Section 864.5 self-certification supply reliability analysis conducted by EMWD; and

WHEREAS, precipitation in the northern Sierra is at 217 percent of average as of January 23, 2017, tracking higher than the wettest year on record (water year 1982-1983); and

WHEREAS, snowpack water content, as of January 23, 2017, in the northern Sierra is at 158 percentage of average, and statewide is at 193 percent of average, and 104 percent of the April 1 average peak; and

WHEREAS, reservoir levels in State Water Project reservoirs, Lake Oroville and San Luis Reservoir, are at 126 percent of average and 102 percent of average, respectively, as of January 22, 2017; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Water Resources estimated on January 18, 2017, that it will be able to deliver 60 percent of the requested State Water Project water this year, and this estimate is likely to be adjusted upward after additional snowpack and runoff readings from the January 2017 storms; and

WHEREAS, in the upper Colorado River Basin, precipitation is at 133 percent of average and snowpack is at 161 percent of the seasonal mean, as of January 23, 2017; and

WHEREAS, for the past nine months EMWD has increased water supply reliability with the recharge of State Water Project water into the San Jacinto groundwater basin and in 2016 recharged more water than any previous year; and

WHEREAS, EMWD aims to fully utilize its recycled water supplies and is currently storing an unprecedented amount of recycled water to meet future industrial, agricultural, and landscape water demand; and

WHEREAS, on February 8, 2017, the State Water Board is scheduled to consider extending the statewide Emergency Conservation Regulation for another 270 days, until October 2017; and

WHEREAS, water customers within EMWD's service area acted responsibly and effectively by reducing demands during the drought and have maintained a cumulative demand reduction of 18 percent from June 2015 to December 2016, when compared to 2013. These significant demand reductions were maintained even after EMWD's "stress test" under the existing Emergency Conservation Regulation resulted in a conservation standard of zero in June of 2016; and

WHEREAS, EMWD seeks to maintain credibility and relevancy with its customers and the public by ending the drought emergency status in light of the improved water conditions throughout the state and Colorado River Basin and shifting focus away from extreme and reactive conservation practices to more long-term sustained water use efficiency; and


WHEREAS, ending the emergency status now will help support EMWD's ability to call upon customers and achieve extraordinary emergency water conservation actions in the future should local water supply conditions merit such actions; and

WHEREAS, the EMWD has a long history of supporting innovative and effective water use efficiency programs and will continue to assist its customers in meeting long-term conservation goals.

NOW, THEREFORE, THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF EASTERN MUNICIPAL WATER DISTRICT DOES HEREBY RESOLVE, DETERMINE AND ORDER AS FOLLOWS:

1. Encourage Governor Brown to declare the state-wide drought emergency to be over and to direct and the State Water Resources Control Board to take action to allow the current drought Emergency Conservation Regulation to expire in February 2017.
2. This Resolution shall be effective upon its adoption.

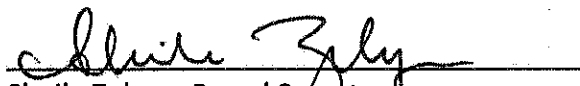
DATED: February 1, 2017



David J. Slawson, President

I hereby certify that the foregoing is a full, true and correct copy of the Resolution adopted by the Board of Directors of the Eastern Municipal Water District at its meeting held on February 1, 2017.

ATTEST:



Sheila Zelaya, Board Secretary

(SEAL)

