

Regional Water Quality Control Board  
North Coast Region  
Executive Officer's Summary Report  
February 3, 2021

**ITEM: 5**

**SUBJECT:** Update on Monthly Water Conservation and Reporting & Curtailment Activities for the North Coast Region (*Charlotte Ely and Marielle Rhodeiro, Office of Research, Planning and Performance; Sam Boland-Brien, Erik Ekdahl, Division of Water Rights, State Water Board*)

**BOARD ACTION:** This is an informational item only; no action will be taken by the Regional Water Board.

**BACKGROUND:** In the spring of 2021 the Governor declared a drought emergency for much of California, beginning with a proclamation solely for the Russian River watershed. These proclamations triggered various actions subsequently taken by the State Water Resources Control Board to address drought conditions throughout the state. Despite the critical precipitation events in the North Coast and throughout the state through the month of December 2021, California is still in a drought.

The purpose of this information item is for staff of the State Water Board to provide: 1) an update on the status of water conservation and reporting within the North Coast, 2) an overview of new statewide water conservation requirements, and 3) an update on drought emergency regulations (i.e. curtailments) in the North Coast Region.

**DISCUSSION:**

- Urban Conservation: How does North Coast Compare to the rest of the state?
- Overview of 1668/606 framework
- Update on the emergency conservation regulation
- Curtailments in the North Coast

***Monthly Conservation and Production Reports***

On April 21, 2020, the State Water Resources Control Board adopted [Resolution No. 2020-0009<sup>1</sup>](#), approving the Monthly Urban Water Conservation Reporting regulation. The regulation became effective on October 1, 2020. The reports are due on the 28th of each month.

As of November 2021, the North Coast average residential daily per capita water use (R-GPCD) is 48 GPCD. The statewide average R-GPCD for November 2021 is 78 GPCD; The North Coast R-GPCD is 38% lower than the statewide average. 5 out of 13 suppliers that provided data for November 2021 have declared a shortage of more than 10% of the local supply. Individual supplier R-GPCD values in the North Coast region range from 42.27 to 78.50 GPCD between the 13 suppliers. Santa Rosa (42 GPCD),

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Windsor (46 GPCD), Arcata (46 GPCD), and Humboldt CSD (48 GPCD) all average below 50 GPCD in their respective service areas.

### ***Overview of the new efficiency framework (AB 1668/SB 606)***

On May 31, 2018, Governor Brown signed two bills which build on the ongoing efforts to “make water conservation a California way of life.” SB 606 (Hertzberg) and AB 1668 (Friedman). These bills (1668/606) established a new foundation for long-term improvements in water conservation and drought planning to adapt to climate change and the resulting longer and more intense droughts in California. The bills amended existing law to provide expanded and new authorities and requirements to enable permanent changes and actions for those purposes, improving the state's water future for generations to come.

SB 606 and AB 1668 lay out a new framework for the efficient use of water in California. As part of that new framework, urban retail water suppliers will use standards to calculate what's called an "urban water objective," based on the water needed in their service area for efficient indoor residential water use, outdoor residential water use, commercial, industrial and institutional (CII) irrigation with dedicated meters, and reasonable amounts of system water loss, along with consideration of other unique local uses (i.e., variances) and a “bonus incentive,” or credit, for potable water reuse.

The new framework is a choose-your-own adventure story. Urban retail water suppliers must comply with the overall objective, not with any one individual standard. If greater investment in residential indoor water use efficiency programs is too costly for a given agency, they can focus elsewhere -- on reducing outdoor use, for example.

Since AB 1668 and SB 606 passed, the Department of Water Resources (DWR) and the State Water Board have been closely coordinating to carry out the statute's directives. DWR was directed to conduct studies and provide recommendations to the SWB. DWR anticipates providing their recommendations to the State Water Board this winter. State Water Board was directed to adopt new efficiency's standards by summer 2022.

### ***Emergency Conservation Regulation to prohibit certain wasteful water use***

On January 4, 2022, the State Water Resources Control Board adopted an emergency regulation that prohibits certain wasteful water use practices statewide and encourages Californians to monitor their water use more closely while supporting habits to use water wisely.

The regulation were scheduled to be effective starting on or about January 14, 2022, depending on the Office of Administrative Law process. The regulation applies to individual water users, including cities, counties, and businesses and prohibits potable water use for washing vehicles without an automatic shutoff nozzle, washing impervious areas, irrigating turf within 48 hours of ¼-inch rain, and irrigating turf on medians, among other potable water uses. The regulation does include a health and safety

exemption. Homeowners' Associations (under the Davis-Stirling Act) and cities and counties (under Government Code) may not enforce landscaping rules that restrict certain emergency drought responses.

To be clear, there is no prohibition in the regulation on watering trees, and communities are encouraged to water trees during drought conditions, especially with rain harvested and recycled water (see [Save Our Water Save Our Trees](#) for tips). Local agencies may adopt more stringent conservation measures and adopt their own enforcement practices. Anyone may report violations through the [SaveWater.CA.Gov](#) website portal. You can find updated information on the [Conservation Emergency Regulation](#)s program webpage.

### ***Curtailments in the North Coast***

The Division of Water Rights continues to implement two drought emergency regulations associated with the North Coast region. The regulations were adopted by the State Water Board in 2021 and cover the: (1) Russian River watershed; and (2) Scott River and Shasta River watersheds.

The Russian River drought emergency regulation became effective on July 12, 2021 and the Scott River and Shasta River watersheds drought emergency regulation became effective on August 30, 2021. The drought emergency regulations expire one year following their effectiveness unless renewed or suspended. The drought emergency regulations provide for curtailment of water rights in order of priority in order to protect senior water rights. The Scott River and Shasta River watersheds drought emergency regulation also establishes minimum instream flows for the protection of coho and Chinook salmon in the Scott River and Shasta River watersheds. The State Water Board has implemented and suspended curtailments in these watersheds as appropriate based on forecast and hydrologic conditions. State Water Board staff also support local cooperative solutions to support flow and fisheries needs. The current status of curtailments is available on the applicable drought webpage for the watersheds ([Russian River Drought Response | California State Water Resources Control Board](#); [Scott River and Shasta River Watersheds Drought Response | California State Water Resources Control Board](#)).

**RECOMMENDATION:** N/A This is an informational item only.

### **SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS:**

1. State Water Resources Control Board: Regulation on Monthly Water Conservation Reporting  
[https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water\\_issues/programs/conservation\\_portal/water\\_conservation\\_reports/docs/rs2020\\_0009.pdf](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/conservation_portal/water_conservation_reports/docs/rs2020_0009.pdf)
2. Making Conservation a CA Way of Life website:  
[www.waterboards.ca.gov/water\\_issues/programs/conservation\\_portal/california\\_statutes.html](http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/conservation_portal/california_statutes.html)

3. Drought Conservation Emergency Regulation website:  
[https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water\\_issues/programs/conservation\\_portal/reg/s/emergency\\_regulation.html](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/conservation_portal/reg/s/emergency_regulation.html)
4. Russian River Drought website: [Russian River Drought Response | California State Water Resources Control Board](#)
5. Scott & Shasta River Drought website: [Scott River and Shasta River Watersheds Drought Response | California State Water Resources Control Board](#)