



**CITY OF**

**ONTARIO**

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December 20, 2017

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Jeanine Townsend, Clerk to the Board  
State Water Resources Control Board  
P.O. Box 100  
Sacramento, CA 95812-2000



RE: Comment Letter – Prohibiting Wasteful Water Use Practices

Dear Ms. Townsend,

The City of Ontario (City) appreciates both the opportunity to provide input on the subject proposed regulatory action and the State Water Resources Control Board's (Water Board) attention to local government concerns.

The Governor's Executive Orders during the most recent drought, particularly Executive Order B-37-16, directed the Water Board to prohibit practices that waste potable water. In its proposed text for regulatory action, the Water Board has extended some prohibitions to recycled water. While certain practices are wasteful regardless of the water source, such as watering in a manner that causes runoff, other practices can be engaged in responsibly with alternative water supply sources, such as recycled water.

Many agencies, including the City, have invested millions of dollars in recycled water treatment and infrastructure to establish a drought-resistant water supply and comply with the Governor's Executive Orders. The business community, including local homeowners' associations, has contributed significant investments to convert medians with turf to recycled water. The proposed restrictions would strand these assets and deprive the public of the benefit that their funds were intended to provide. When recycled water is not utilized, it is often lost. The regulation would result in lost benefits without true water savings.

One reasonable and responsible use for recycled water is irrigating turf, including on public medians. Turf vastly decreases stormwater runoff and holds less heat when compared to hardscape, an alternative that cities may implement if irrigation with recycled water is no longer an option. In addition, recycled water used for irrigation may provide a groundwater recharge benefit. These are

tangible benefits to the environment. In addition, the cost of removing and replacing ornamental turf on public medians can be especially burdensome for agencies. Areas in the City that are irrigated with recycled water display prominent signage to indicate that this alternative water supply source is being utilized. This signage is an effective tool in educating the public about the importance of saving potable water for particular uses.

Although the Water Board included in its proposed text an exemption for areas that serve a “community or neighborhood function,” this language is broad and the process for obtaining an exemption is undefined, leaving agencies with uncertainty about whether or not specific areas of turf are eligible.

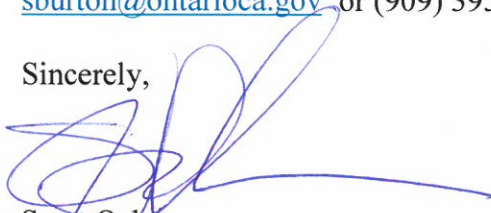
For the above reasons, the City requests that the Water Board not prohibit the use of recycled water to irrigate turf on public medians.

The City would also like to express concern regarding the extension of prohibited irrigation to landscaped areas between the street and the sidewalk (“parkways”). While medians often have independent irrigation systems, these parkway areas, which may be maintained by the private property owner that fronts them, may be irrigated by the same system that irrigates private property. The proximity and even overlap of these systems presents both a cross-contamination hazard as well as a significant hurdle to enforcement. The City requests that the Water Board not include these areas in the proposed prohibitions.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment on the proposed text of the regulation. Revising the text to reflect the City’s recommended exceptions for (1) irrigation of turf on medians with recycled water, and (2) irrigation of turf on parkways, will honor the investments made by public agencies and the business community, while encouraging responsible and sustainable water use throughout the state.

If you have any questions, please contact Scott Burton, Utilities General Manager, at [sburton@ontarioca.gov](mailto:sburton@ontarioca.gov) or (909) 395-2682.

Sincerely,



Scott Ochoa  
City Manager