

Basin Technical Advisory Committee

April 13, 2015

via email and US Mail

Bear Valley Mutual
Water Company

City of Colton

East Valley Water District

City of Loma Linda

City of Redlands

City of Rialto

City of Riverside

San Bernardino County
Flood Control District

San Bernardino Municipal
Water Department

San Bernardino Valley
Municipal Water District

San Bernardino Valley
Water Conservation District

West Valley Water District

Western Municipal
Water District

Yucaipa Valley
Water District

Jessica Bean
Clerk to the Board
State Water Resources Control Board
1001 I Street
Sacramento, CA 95814
Jessica.Bean@waterboards.ca.gov

Dear Mrs. Bean,

The Basin Technical Advisory Committee (BTAC) is comprised of retail water agencies, flood control, wholesale water agencies and other stakeholders that collectively represents nearly 1.5 million people. The BTAC works collaboratively on water-related issues and water resources management within the upper Santa Ana River Watershed.

The BTAC recently reviewed the Governor's Executive Order requiring a 25% reduction in statewide water use and the State Water Resources Control Board (Water Board) proposed regulatory framework intended to achieve this reduction. The BTAC would like to ask the Water Board to incorporate the following suggestions in the final regulatory framework:

1. Consider requiring a flat 25% reduction statewide. The use of percentages somewhat "self corrects" the discrepancy between low Residential Gallons Per Capita per Day (R-GPCD) and higher R-GPCD since 25% of a smaller number is a smaller amount. The Water Board may want to consider a flat 25% reduction, statewide to simplify the regulation and messaging.
2. Change the baseline from September 2013 to the water agency baselines established under SBX7-7. Using a baseline date of September 2013 is unfair to water agencies that experienced a dramatic reduction in demand due to the mortgage crisis. Imposing an additional 25% reduction will result in water rate increases in these areas that are already in a financial crisis, including the City of San Bernardino, which is in bankruptcy. Instead, the Water Board should apply the reduction requirements to the baselines established by each water agency under SBX7-7. For agencies that were not required to prepare a baseline under SBX7-7, consider choosing a baseline before the mortgage crisis such as 2008-2009.
3. Include the impact of climate in the distribution of the "tiers". The "Urban Water Suppliers and Proposed Framework Tiers to Achieve 25% Use Reduction" (tiers) assign a conservation standard based upon R-GPCD without consideration of other factors. We would recommend that the analysis consider the climate for a region (degree days, evapotranspiration rate, etc.). For example, a cooler region may be able to completely stop outdoor irrigation without killing landscape material while a hotter climate would still need to apply a minor amount to keep landscape material alive.

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4. Consider different tiers for summer and non-summer. The Water Board should consider different tiers for the summer months and the non-summer months that would still result in an overall savings of 25% to avoid any public perception that there is an expectation of drastic reduction to historical indoor water usage during winter months as it relates to health and safety uses.
5. Include average lot size in the distribution of the tiers. The draft tiers do not consider the difference between cities and the suburbs. In cities, there can be little, to no outdoor landscape resulting in a low R-GPCD. In the suburbs, the R-GPCD will be naturally higher due to the presence of outdoor landscaping. The Water Board should consider including this as a factor in assigning the tiers, while still encouraging conservation efforts throughout the State.
6. Include the use of recycled water in the distribution of the tiers. Many communities have made a significant investment in recycled water facilities that went into operation before 2013. Since this investment was made before the Water Board's "baseline" of September 2013, it was inadvertently eliminated from consideration when the tiers were assigned. Recognition of the investment in recycled water prior to 2013 should be included in order to recognize this investment and encourage further recycled water investment.
7. Provide an appeal process for agencies. In some cases, the data used by the Water Board to assign the tiers may be incorrect. Please provide an appeal process where agencies can work with the Water Board to correct any data errors.
8. Exclude "Urban Interface" from complete elimination of irrigation. In some cases, fire codes require maintenance of an irrigated, urban interface, to protect structures from fire. The Water Board should require these areas to be efficiently irrigated but exclude them from complete elimination of irrigation.
9. Exclude bio swales from complete elimination of irrigation. In some instances, water quality regulations have required the installation of a bio swale to remove pollutants from runoff before it reaches local streams. The Water Board should require these areas to be efficiently irrigated but exclude them from complete elimination of irrigation.
10. Require Homeowner Associations (HOAs) to accept low water use plants. Some HOAs only allow installation of artificial turf to replace turf grass. Since artificial turf is, perhaps, the most expensive option, this requirement can actually deter homeowners from considering removing turf grass. The state should legislatively eliminate any such requirements.
11. Apply same potable water elimination for landscaped medians to CalTrans landscaped areas.
12. Consider regional compliance with the 25% reduction. The Water Board may want to consider the possibility of allowing regions to work cooperatively together to achieve a collective 25% compliance in their region. This will encourage dialogue and exchange of ideas amongst agencies.
13. Continue to promote long-term solutions to California's water problems. To help California make it through future droughts, we encourage the state to expedite new

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water storage projects and the Bay-Delta Conservation Plan, both of which would allow California to store more water in wet years so that it could be used in drought periods.

This historical drought, combined with California's constantly increasing population have placed the state in a precarious position. We support and recognize the need for the state to cut water use by 25% and appreciate the challenge before the Water Board to develop the regulatory framework to achieve this requirement. We also appreciate the Water Board accepting these, and other comments, as you work toward finalizing this framework.

Sincerely,



Thomas J. Crowley, P.E.
Chair

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