



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO  
**REPORT TO THE CITY COUNCIL**

DATE ISSUED: April 14, 2011 REPORT NO: 11-060  
ATTENTION: Natural Resources and Culture Committee  
Agenda of April 20, 2011  
SUBJECT: Report from the Public Utilities Department regarding Water Supply and  
Termination of Drought Response Levels  
REFERENCE: SDMC 67.38

REQUESTED ACTION: Adopt a Resolution to declare an end to the water shortage emergency and Drought Response Levels (currently at Level 2).

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Accept the proposed action.

SUMMARY:

With California's water supply drastically improving this year, the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD) has terminated the FY2010/FY2011 Water Supply Allocation Plan (water supply restrictions) and will not implement an allocation plan for FY2011/FY2012. It is expected that the San Diego County Water Authority (CWA) will also lift its drought related water allocations in the next few weeks due to the increase in water supplies. The City of San Diego implemented a Drought Response Level 2 because of water allocations imposed by both MWD and CWA. Based upon the actions of these wholesalers, we are recommending an end to the implementation of Drought Response measures in the City of San Diego.

BACKGROUND:

On March 30, 2011, Governor Jerry Brown declared California's three-year drought over. Significant rainfall and snowpack has dramatically improved water supply conditions, and the State's reservoirs are all at above average levels. As of March 29, Lake Oroville is at 104% of average and Lake Shasta is at 111% of average. Snowpack in the Sierras is 165% of average.

Locally, San Diego has received almost 12 inches of rain as of March 29, 2011, compared to the annual average of 10.77 inches. The MWD reports that Diamond Valley Lake is almost full, using abundant rain conditions to replenish the reservoir almost completely.

Because of the improved State supply conditions, on April 12, the MWD Board of Directors terminated water allocations imposed by Drought Level 2. This action means that MWD will not require continued water use reductions from its member agencies for FY11/12. As a result, City

staff anticipates that the CWA will likewise lift its allocation requirements and rescind its current Drought Level 2 Water Alert.

DISCUSSION:

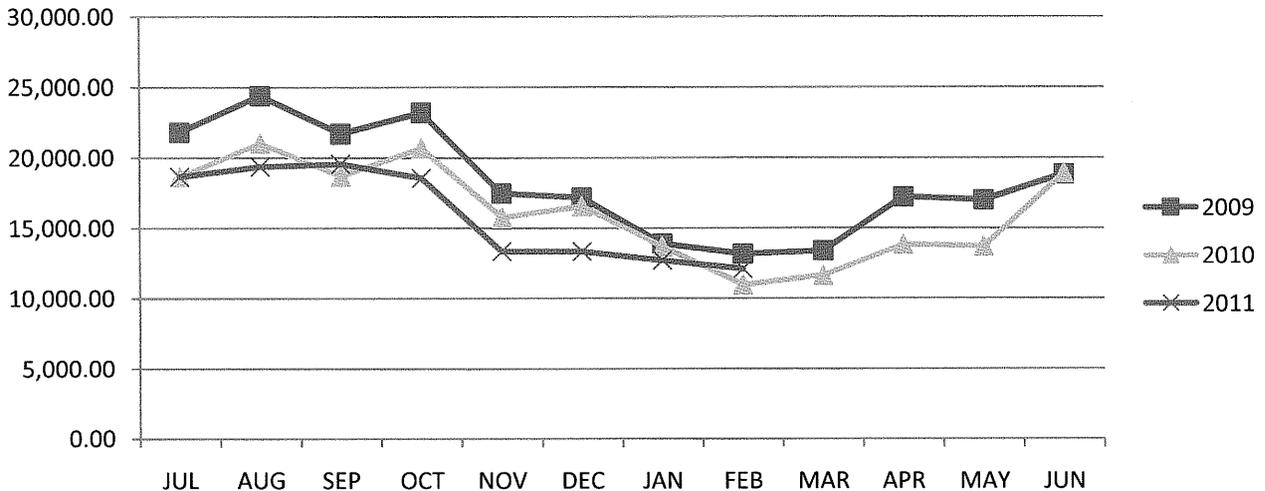
City of San Diego Water Use Restrictions

San Diego Municipal Code Section 67.38 dictates actions taken during water emergencies. It is this section of the Municipal Code that was used to declare Drought Response Level 2 effective June 2009 to help achieve water use reduction targets. The Drought Response Levels are considered when an anticipated consumer demand reduction is required to ensure that sufficient supplies will be available to meet anticipated demand.

Mandatory water use restrictions have been in place in the City of San Diego since June 1, 2009. Citizens have heeded the call to conserve water and have achieved water savings that surpassed expectations, thus avoiding costly penalties.

Chart A shows how overall water consumption in the City has trended in the last three years. Usage in FY 2010 was significantly lower than FY 2009, the year before mandatory water conservation was implemented. San Diegans have continued to conserve, as billed consumption in FY 2011 follows the first year trend from FY 2010 and is significantly lower than FY 2009.

**Chart A – Total Consumption in Acre-Feet (AF)**



Permanent Water Use Restrictions

Since MWD has announced and CWA is expected to announce an adequate water supply to meet at least next year's demand, it is recommended that the City of San Diego, via City Council Resolution, declare an end to the Drought Response actions. The City will still enforce the water waste prohibitions in Section 67.3803, which are in effect at all times. These restrictions took

effect in June 2009 when this section of the Municipal Code was updated, and later amended in December 2010 to make “time of day watering” a permanent restriction.

Specifically, these instances of water waste will be prohibited at all times:

1. Allowing water to leave the customer's property by drainage onto adjacent properties or public or private roadways or streets or gutters due to excessive irrigation and/or uncorrected leaks.
2. Failing to repair or stop a water leak.
3. Using running hose to wash down sidewalks, driveways, parking areas, tennis courts, patios or other paved areas, except to alleviate immediate safety or sanitation hazards, unless connected to a water efficient device such as a commercial water broom.
4. Overfilling swimming pools and spas.
5. Using decorative water fountains that do not recirculate water.

Additionally, the following restrictions are also in effect:

1. Vehicle washing can only be done in a commercial car wash or using a hose with an automatic shutoff nozzle or hand held container.
2. Single pass-through cooling systems as part of new water service connections will be prohibited. Non-recirculating systems in all new conveyer car wash and commercial laundry systems will also be prohibited.
3. Restaurants and other food establishments will only serve and refill water upon request.
4. Guests in hotels, motels, and other commercial lodging establishments will be provided the option of not laundering towels and linens daily.
5. A *customer* may only irrigate *potted plants*, non-commercial vegetable gardens and fruit trees, residential and commercial landscapes, including golf courses, parks, school grounds and recreation fields, before 10:00 a.m. and after 6:00 p.m. during the months of June through October and before 10:00 a.m. and after 4:00 p.m. during the months of November through May. A *customer* may irrigate at any time the following:
  - (1) as required by a landscape permit;
  - (2) for erosion control;
  - (3) for establishment, repair, or renovation of public use fields for schools and parks;
  - (4) for landscape establishment following a *disaster*. Such irrigation is permitted for a period of up to two months, after which a hardship variance is required in accordance with Section 67.3810;
  - (5) for renovation or repair of an irrigation system with an operator present; or
  - (6) for nursery and commercial *growers* using a hand held hose equipped with a positive shutoff nozzle, a hand held container, or when a drip or micro-irrigation system or equipment is used. Irrigation of nursery propagation beds is permitted at any time.

## Public Outreach

To announce the urgency of the need to conserve water and inform the public of mandatory water use restrictions about to take place, the City embarked on a “No Time to Waste, No Water to Waste” campaign designed to capture the public’s attention and cooperation. Mayor Sanders promoted water conservation practices and restrictions through Public Service Announcements, press conferences, and hosting the Water Conservation Poster and Film Contests. This campaign helped the City achieve its 8% usage reduction goal for Fiscal Year 2010, and is helping achieve the 8% goal for the current Fiscal Year.

Based upon the recommendation to terminate the Drought Response Level 2, the public messaging efforts will be transitioning into one that: 1) recognizes achievements in reducing consumption; 2) incorporates a sense of community in practicing water conservation; and 3) allows San Diegans to be proud of their achievement and thus more inclined to continue using water efficiently. “San Diegans Waste No Water” achieves just that. It is an affirmation that San Diegans did their best to avoid wasting water, and that they were not alone in doing so.

This new phase of the campaign will focus on informing the public about the permanent water use restrictions that remain in place as the City scales back from Level 2 water use restrictions. Media presence will primarily be through the more traditional press releases/press conferences, public service announcements, and articles in community newspapers. Outreach will also focus primarily on low cost outlets such as electronic newsletters, community events and presentations.

## RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is recommended that the City declare an end to Drought Response Levels in accordance to SDMC Section 67.3809(d). The City is currently under Drought Response Level 2 and the recommendation is to not be in any Drought Response Level.

## FISCAL CONSIDERATIONS:

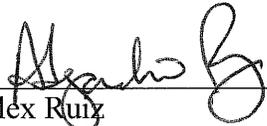
The 10.0 limited positions approved for Drought Response Level 2 amount to an annual expense of \$786,758. These would be considered savings for Fiscal Year 2012 when the limited positions are terminated.

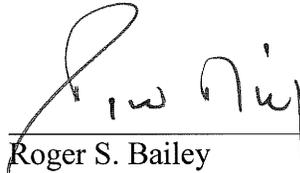
## COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION AND PUBLIC OUTREACH EFFORTS:

The termination of declared water emergencies and Drought Response Levels will be published in various local newspapers, newsletters, City web sites, and through direct contact with customers through community event and presentations.

KEY STAKEHOLDERS AND PROJECTED IMPACTS:

Key stakeholders include all water customers of the Public Utilities Department. The requested action will lift mandatory water use restrictions in place during a Drought Response Level 2.

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