

TO: James L. App, City Manager
FROM: Doug Monn, Public Works Director
SUBJECT: Water Conservation and Water Shortage Contingency Plan Amendment Options
DATE: August 18, 2009

NEEDS: For City Council to consider possible amendments to the Water Conservation and Water Shortage Contingency Plan.

FACTS:

1. Over the last three years, water supplies throughout California have been severely impacted by drought.
2. The City of El Paso De Robles water production capacity is highly dependent on factors such as precipitation and local and regional demands for groundwater.
3. Due to current statewide drought conditions, the City's underflow wells are producing roughly 68% of historic levels, and SWCRB has indicated it may restrict underflow pumping due to current drought conditions and has stated that water agencies should adopt conservation efforts to reduce urban water use by a minimum of 20%.
4. Despite City efforts to rehabilitate wells, install new wells and recommission standby wells, the amount of water produced in the summer months has been declining.
5. The City's water storage capacity is approximately 12 MGD, roughly 50% of which is allocated for emergency and fire-fighting storage capacity. Without the mandatory water conservations measures currently in place, fire-fighting capacity could be depleted within three days of prolonged hot weather conditions, thereby creating a potential threat to public health and safety.
6. The adoption and enforcement of the Water Conservation and Water Shortage Contingency Plan (Ordinance No. 956 N.S.) was necessary to manage the City of El Paso de Robles' water demand and supply to minimize the effects of water shortages within Paso Robles.
7. Total City water consumption increase some 350% in the summer months, due primarily to landscape irrigation.
8. The City is currently in a Level II supply shortage. Without the mandatory conservation measure currently in effect the disparity between demand and supply is projected to be at least 20%.
9. In addition to implementing best management practices that guard against waste and the unreasonable uses of water, Level II supply shortage restrictions limit landscape watering to three days per week between the hours of 7pm to 9am.
10. Some in the community are requesting that a variance be granted that will allow additional watering for new turf and other landscape installations.

**ANALYSIS &
CONCLUSION:**

Under normal and Level I water supply shortage conditions there are no restrictions on landscape watering. However, due to the magnitude of the shortfalls for Levels II through IV, increasing restrictions on non-essential water usage are put into effect – up to and including complete cessation of all landscape irrigation under Level IV.

The following are possible amendment options to the mandatory Level II supply shortage watering restrictions for consideration:

1. Non-Restrictive Grace Period
Under this option a water customer shall notify the Water Conservation Manager that a new landscape was being installed, and a 15-day grace period would be granted the water customer. During this time there would be no limits on watering days, watering times, quantity, etc.
2. Restrictive Grace Period
Under this option a water customer would notify the Water Conservation Manager that a new landscape was being installed, and a 15-day grace period would be granted the water customer. Under this option exemptions will be made during the non-peak-season months October through April. No other restrictions would apply.
3. Non-Restrictive Non-Peak Period
This option would remove all Level II watering restriction during the non-peak months of October through April. Level II irrigation restrictions would automatically be reinitiated during peak season provided a Level II supply shortage remains in effect

POLICY

REFERENCE: California Water Code Section 10610 (Urban Water Management Planning Act), Ordinance NO 956 N.S.

FISCAL

IMPACT: None

OPTIONS:

- a. Receive and file report.
- b. Direct staff to prepare an amendment to the Ordinance No 956 N.S incorporating the provisions outlined under Option 1, 2, or 3.
- c. Amend, modify, or reject the above option.

Prepared by: Christopher Alakel, P.E., Water Resources Manager