



## Council Agenda Report

**From:** Dick McKinley, Public Works Director

**Subject:** Water Conservation Requirements

**Date:** April 18, 2017

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### Facts

1. On April 1, 2015 Governor Brown directed the State Water Resources Control Board (Water Board) to impose restrictions to achieve a 25% reduction in urban water use state-wide, as compared to water used in 2013 (Executive Order B-29-15). The Water Board adopted emergency water conservation regulations on May 5, 2015. The emergency regulations assigned urban water suppliers a conservation standard according to each supplier's residential water use. The City's conservation standard was to achieve a 28% reduction in water use relative to the same months of 2013.
2. In response to the State's emergency water conservation regulations, the City maintained the declared "Level 2" condition (mandatory conservation) under the City's Water Conservation and Water Shortage Contingency Plan. The City also amended Section 14.02.060 of the Municipal Code to restrict landscape watering days to no more than two days per week and to comply with specific prohibitions included in the State's adopted emergency water conservation requirements (Ordinance No. 1014 N.S.).
3. During the period of June 2016 through March 2017, the water customers in Paso Robles saved more than 4.5 billion gallons of water. This is equivalent of 13, 810 acre feet of water, or a one acre piece of property more than 2.5 miles deep. Those savings were achieved without the City having to put any penalties in place.
4. On May 18, 2016, the Water Board amended emergency water conservation regulations in recognition of differing water supply conditions across the state. The amended regulations allowed each urban water supplier to identify and certify a conservation standard that is appropriate for its service area according to methodologies prescribed by the Water Board. The revised regulations became effective on June 1, 2016. The City evaluated water supply and demand conditions according to the Water Board's requirements and certified a conservation standard that replaced the previous standard. The City's revised conservation standard is to maintain water use below the amount used in 2013.
5. The City Council amended Section 14.02.060 of the Municipal Code on July 19, 2016, to allow watering landscapes up to three days per week under a "Level 2" condition (Ordinance No. 1032 N.S). This change has not affected the City's ability to achieve the currently mandated conservation standard and the City continues to conserve more water than required under the current regulations.
6. On February 8, 2017, the Water Board extended emergency conservation regulations through October 2017. The Water Board cited that drought conditions continued in some parts of California and that continued efforts by the state and local water suppliers were necessary to prevent waste and unreasonable use of water.
7. On April 7, 2017, Governor Brown formally declared an end to the state-wide drought.

## **Options**

1. Take no action.
2. Declare a "Level 1" condition effective June 1, 2017, ending the current "Level 2" condition.

## **Analysis and Conclusions**

The City's water supplies are sufficient to serve demand, and the water conservation requirements were primarily to comply with the State mandate, not because the City was short of water. In 2015 and 2016 the City maintained "Level 2" mandatory water conservation requirements, which included limits on landscape-watering schedules, in order to ensure compliance with the state-mandated conservation requirements. These measures, along with other factors, allowed the City to achieve the 28% conservation mandate that applied to the City from June 2015 through February 2016 (29.41% achieved), and the 24% conservation mandate that applied to the City from March 2016 through May 2016 (32% achieved).

Since June 2016, when the City's current conservation standard became effective, the City's water conservation has continued to exceed the mandated conservation amounts resulting in a savings of 469 million gallons more than required by the mandate over a period of ten months (a total of 25.4% savings). Although water use is likely to increase somewhat if the City ends the current "Level 2" condition, water use is not projected to exceed the threshold that would result in non-compliance with the City's current conservation standard. City staff projects that voluntary water conservation and permanent improvements in water use practices will prevent water use from rebounding abruptly, and that the City's current conservation standard can be met without limiting landscape watering schedules.

If the City council were to declare a "Level 1" condition, the City would no longer restrict landscape-watering schedules, however, the City's permanent prohibitions on water waste and long-term water conservation programs would remain in effect. City staff projects that the City could meet the mandated water conservation standard without limiting landscape-watering schedules. The City's permanent prohibitions on water waste and long-term water conservation programs would remain in effect under a declared "Level 1" condition, or without a declared water conservation condition, however landscape-watering schedules would not be restricted. If the community's total water use were to approach the compliance limit, the City could re-instate mandatory conservation requirements by declaring a "Level 2" condition (mandatory conservation).

As a result of the proposed change in water conservation schedules, the Water Conservation Assistant part-time staff will have reduced enforcement hours and with the remaining hours will focus on customer assistance, assistance with water leaks, water conservation rebates, and water surveys.

## **Fiscal Impact**

Some positive fiscal impact to the City's water enterprise fund resulting from increased water sales is expected for moving to a Level 1 condition, as usage volumes will increase, if only marginally. However, fiscal impact may be minor because customers are used to conserving and are not expected to make drastic changes in water use. As a result of this proposed change, the part-time staff would have some reduction in hours due to reduced enforcement efforts.

## **Recommendation** [Option 2]

Approve Resolution 17-xxx declaring a "Level 1" condition for water use restrictions (voluntary conservation) effective June 1, 2017.

## **Attachments**

1. Resolution 17-xxx

RESOLUTION NO. 17-XXX

**RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF EL PASO DE ROBLES  
DECLARING LEVEL 1 VOLUNTARY CONSERVATION CONDITION**

WHEREAS, since 2015 the City has maintained a declared Level 2 Condition (mandatory conservation) under the City's Water Conservation and Water Shortage Contingency Plan to ensure compliance with state-mandated conservation requirements; and

WHEREAS, the City has evaluated water supply and demand conditions according to the Water Board's requirements and certified a conservation standard requiring that the City maintain water use below the amount used in 2013; and

WHEREAS, City staff projects that the City could meet current water conservation standards without limiting landscape-watering schedules and under a Level 1 Condition (voluntary conservation); and

WHEREAS, declaring a Level 1 Condition under the City's Water Conservation and Water Shortage Contingency Plan would remove the limits on landscape-watering schedules, but would not end the City's permanent prohibitions on water waste, or long-term water conservation goals and programs.

NOW, THEREFORE, THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF EL PASO DE ROBLES DOES HEREBY RESOLVE AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. All of the above recitals are true and correct and incorporated herein by reference.

Section 2. The City Council of the City of Paso Robles does hereby declare a Level 1 Condition, effective June 1, 2017, ending the Level 2 Condition.

APPROVED this 18<sup>th</sup> day of April, 2017, by the following vote:

AYES:  
NOES:  
ABSENT:  
ABSTAIN:

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Steven W. Martin, Mayor

ATTEST:

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Kristen L. Buxkemper, Deputy City Clerk