

**TO:** James L. App, City Manager  
**FROM:** Doug Monn, Public Works Director  
**SUBJECT:** Drought and City Water Contingency Plan  
**DATE:** March 18, 2014

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**NEEDS:** For City Council information and file.

**FACTS:**

1. California is experiencing the driest year in state history, prompting Governor Edmond G. Brown, Jr. to declare a State of Emergency, including a call for voluntary conservation and implementation of local water shortage contingency plans.
2. For the first time since project start-up, the State Dept of Water Resources projects no deliveries from the State Water Project.

NOTE: City water supplies are not dependent on the State Water Project.

3. Rainfall in Paso Robles during the past year has been only 4.99 inches or 34% percent of the annual average rainfall of 14.6 inches.
4. Pumping level declines in City wells are evident as low rainfall persists; however, deliveries are available from the Nacimiento Water Project.
5. The County of San Luis Obispo Board of Supervisors will be considering a declaration of local emergency due to drought conditions at their March 11, 2014, meeting. The proposed County resolution cites agriculture as the primary industry impacted and points to the drought's significant adverse effects on the local economy. In so declaring, the County invokes powers set forth in the California Emergency Services Act.

NOTE: The County's declaration does not affect the City. Regardless, the City has a water conservation contingency program that aligns with drought mitigation actions proposed and/or being taken in the region.

6. In June 2009 City Council adopted the Water Conservation and Water Contingency Plan Ordinance No. 957 N.S. (which was then incorporated into the City's 2010 Urban Water Management Plan in 2011).
7. The Water Contingency Plan provides the tools necessary to temporarily reduce demand. Temporary peaks of demand (particularly during the hottest days of Summer) can be offset by scalable short-term conservation measures to maintain sufficient water production capacity and storage during periods of peak water demand.

8. The Water Contingency Plan prohibits the wasteful use of water and details conservation measures to be taken during temporary peak demand periods.
9. Another temporary seasonal production capacity and drought management tool being utilized is Salinas River underflow augmentation. This involves percolating Lake Nacimiento water into the Salinas River channel adjacent to the City's Thunderbird Wells to help maintain river underflow well levels and production rates.
10. The City has instituted a Level 2 (temporary seasonal) condition each summer since the Plan was adopted in 2009, with the exception of a brief period in 2011 when rainfall was well above normal and very cool summer temperatures prevailed. Level 2 measures are implemented when peak demand is projected to exceed short-term production capacity by 20 percent.

**ANALYSIS &  
CONCLUSION:**

The City's Water Contingency Plan includes measures to offset temporary peak water demands that may temporarily exceed short-term production capacity. The drought conditions across the entire State present that likelihood. Demand management measures outlined in the Plan include:

**Waste Prohibitions (in effect at all times)** – No excessive runoff to streets, restrictions on washing down pavement (with exceptions), car washing only with bucket and hose shut-off nozzle, leaks must be repaired within 7 days of notification by City.

**Level 1:** Implemented when temporary peak summertime demand is projected to exceed supply by up to 10 percent.

Measures: No landscape watering between hours of 9 am to 7 pm (voluntary); repair of leaks within 72 hours of notification.

**Level 2:** Implemented when temporary peak summertime demand is projected to exceed supply by up to 20 percent

Measures: Landscape watering limited to three assigned days per week (mandatory from May 1 to Sept. 30). Issuance of new hydrant meter permits may be suspended.

**Level 3:** Implemented when temporary peak summertime demand is projected to exceed supply by up to 30 percent.

Measures: Landscape watering limited to two assigned days per week; filling or re-filling of ornamental lakes or ponds prohibited (with exceptions); repair of leaks within 48 hours of notification (72 hours for rental properties); car washing

prohibited except at commercial car washes; washing down hard or paved surfaces prohibited; new potable water services are required to offset 100% of their projected use prior to meter installation; new annexations suspended unless no increase in water demand will result.

**Level 4:** Implemented when temporary peak summertime demand is projected to exceed supply by up to 50 percent

Measures: All landscape irrigation, except for crops, products of commercial nurseries, and environmentally sensitive public works projects is prohibited; filling or refilling of residential pools and spas prohibited; the City shall not enter into new agreements to provide water to customers either inside or outside the City.

Staff is closely monitoring well levels, production capacity, and customer water demand, particularly as Summer approaches. With the use of Lake Nacimiento water to maintain water levels and water production rates in the underflow wells, the City's currently available water supplies are forecasted to reach 80%+ of historic summertime peak demand (i.e. what customers historically used before coordinated conservation measures went into effect). Conservation measures are advised to ensure that the season's peak demands do not exceed short-term production capacity such that water storage for fire suppression is compromised. Therefore, the three-day landscape watering schedule will again be enforced beginning May 1<sup>st</sup>.

City staff will continue to reinforce with customers the need to temporarily reduce water usage during the summer. This, combined with the Interim Ordinance Imposing Moratorium on Issuance or Approval of Permits for Construction of New Water Wells or Modification/Rehabilitation of Existing Wells to Increase Groundwater Extraction (Ordinance No. 1000 N. S.) are intended to protect public safety, health and welfare with regard to short-term peak water demand periods.

Further, any proposed annexations or amendments to the General Plan must be addressed in a water supply evaluation per the City's California Environmental Quality Act local guidelines. Those guidelines evaluate impacts on community water supplies and, when appropriate, require new development to secure additional water supply to offset any increase in water demand.

On the supply side, the City's Nacimiento water treatment plant will soon be under construction, allowing use of additional supply from Lake Nacimiento and increasing production capacity and supply when needed most – during hot, Summer weather.

Staff will continue to monitor short-term water production capacity and demand fluctuations as the year progresses and keep the City Council informed of any noteworthy changes.

**POLICY**

**REFERENCE:** Water Conservation and Water Shortage Contingency Plan Ordinance No. 957 N.S., 2010 City of Paso Robles Urban Water Management Plan, City Ordinance No. 1000 N.S., Resolution No. 14-006 - Update to the City's Rules and Regulations for Implementing CEQA, and Governor Brown's Proclamation of a State of Emergency dated January 17, 2014.

**FISCAL**

**IMPACT:** No additional impacts.

**OPTIONS:**

- a. Receive and file; or
- b. Amend, modify or reject the above option.