

Regarding the State's Plan for Making Water Conservation a California Way of Life

WHY IS THE STATE'S PLAN NEEDED?

→ **Governor Brown called on state agencies** to develop this plan to help California prepare for the future. The state is reeling between droughts and downpours, and we know that climate change will intensify these weather extremes.

→ **Using water efficiently** is one of the easiest and least expensive ways to ensure that we have secure and sustainable water supplies in the future.

→ **Efficient water use** will help us replenish groundwater and other supplies that have been severely depleted by years of drought.

WHAT DOES THE STATE'S PLAN DO?

→ **The plan directs state agencies** to develop common statewide standards for efficient indoor water use, outdoor water use, and losses from leaks. To ensure fairness, these standards will then be customized to create a water use target for each water utility based on local conditions such as population and climate.

→ **The plan calls upon** each local water utility to identify and implement actions that it decides are most helpful to meet its target, such as repairing leaks or promoting more water-efficient outdoor landscapes.

WHY IS THE STATE'S NEW APPROACH BETTER THAN REQUIRING A FLAT PERCENTAGE REDUCTION IN WATER USE (FOR EXAMPLE, THE CURRENT REQUIREMENT OF 20% WATER USE REDUCTION BY 2020)?

→ **The State's Plan** is more fair than a one-size-fits-all approach. Each water utility is being asked to achieve a reachable level of water efficiency based on its unique conditions (climate, population, etc.), rather than having to comply with an arbitrary, one-size-fits-all percentage requirement.

→ **This plan achieves** real water savings based on efficient use. The old approach—using percentage reductions—does not guarantee that

water is not squandered. For wasteful users, even a 20% reduction may leave substantial amounts of wasted water on the table. By setting standards based on reasonable, efficient water use, the new targets will avoid uneven or unfair outcomes across the state.

WILL COMMUNITIES THAT HAVE ALREADY REDUCED WATER USE GET CREDIT FOR THEIR EFFORTS?

→ **Yes.** Since the new targets are based on efficient use of water supplies, water utilities that have already increased efficiency and conservation in their areas will be closer to reaching their targets, effectively “crediting” the actions they've taken in previous years.

SHOULD WE BE PRIORITIZING WATER EFFICIENCY WHEN WE DESPERATELY NEED TO IMPROVE AND MODERNIZE OUR INFRASTRUCTURE?

→ **California needs to implement** multiple solutions in the coming years to secure our water future, as called for in the Governor's Water Action Plan. Increasing urban water efficiency is a key part of the overall solution and should take place while infrastructure is updated.

→ **Improved water efficiency** can defer or may even prevent the need to build costly new water infrastructure, which will enable California to focus on maintaining and upgrading existing structures.

HOW WILL THE STATE'S PLAN IMPACT VULNERABLE AND LOW-INCOME COMMUNITIES?

→ **Using water more efficiently** and reducing water waste is the easiest way households can reduce their water bills. Efficiency and conservation are the most cost-effective ways of meeting a community's water demands and limiting spending on new infrastructure.

→ **Building new infrastructure** to meet increased water needs, like reservoirs or desalination plants, costs a lot of money, substantially increasing water costs for everyone and hitting low-income households the hardest. Limiting the need for new infrastructure is a common-

sense way to protect ratepayers.

→ **The State's Plan** includes drought planning requirements that will help vulnerable communities plan for and avoid the crippling water shortages and emergency rate increases that many communities faced during the recent drought.

HOW DOES THE STATE'S PLAN IMPACT INVESTMENTS IN WATER RECYCLING?

→ **Making water use more efficient** and developing recycled water supplies are complementary strategies, similar to California's requirements for both increased energy efficiency and renewable energy sources.

→ **The plan will enable** efficient use of recycled water supplies, maximizing the value of those investments and ensuring all water supplies—including recycled water—are not wasted.

HOW WILL LOCAL UTILITIES DETERMINE WHAT THEIR WATER USE TARGET IS?

→ **State agencies will** develop basic standards for efficient indoor water use, outdoor water use, and leak losses. A local utility then applies these basic standards, with technical support from the state, to set its own water use target based on its local conditions (climate, population, etc.). Already, the state is developing information on landscape areas in each water district that local utilities can use to set outdoor water use targets.

WHAT IS THE IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE FOR THE STATE'S PLAN?

→ **The plan calls for** state agencies to develop new water efficiency standards by 2020, with individual water utilities responsible for meeting new customized water use targets by 2025. The plan also proposes having water utilities develop interim water use targets, based on interim efficiency standards, in 2018 so that they can start implementation of the actions needed to meet the 2025 requirements. Beginning in 2019, the plan calls for utilities to submit annual reports to measure their level of water use and progress in improving water efficiency.