



Media Release

State Water Board adopts emergency water conservation regulation

Regulation to boost water savings starting in June

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SACRAMENTO – In response to Governor Gavin Newsom’s March 28 [Executive Order](#) the State Water Resources Control Board adopted an [emergency water conservation regulation](#) today that will ensure more aggressive conservation by local water agencies across the state.

The new regulation bans irrigating turf at commercial, industrial, and institutional properties, such as grass in front of or next to large industrial or commercial buildings. The ban does not include watering turf that is used for recreation or other community purposes, water used at residences or water to maintain trees. The regulation also requires all urban water suppliers to implement conservation actions under Level 2 of their Water Shortage Contingency Plans.

In March 2022, the state’s urban retail water suppliers reported average water use statewide that was nearly 19% greater than in March 2020, lowering the state’s cumulative water savings since July 2021 to 3.7%. Yesterday, Governor Newsom convened leaders from the state’s largest urban water suppliers imploring them to take more aggressive action to combat drought.

“The severity of this drought requires all Californians to save water in every possible way,” said Joaquin Esquivel, chair of the State Water Board. “The regulation compels water systems and local authorities to implement a range of additional critical conservation measures as we enter the hot and dry summer months.”

Level 2 water shortage contingency plans are meant to address up to a 20% shortage of water supplies. In addition to implementing Level 2 actions, the regulation requires urban water suppliers to fast-track supply and demand assessments to plan for potential extended dry conditions.

Level 2 actions often include things such as:

- Limiting outdoor irrigation to certain days or hours
- Increasing patrolling to identify water waste



CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

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- Enforcing water-use prohibitions
- Increasing communication about the importance of water conservation

Some water suppliers already have imposed strong new restrictions on customers' water use in accordance with their drought management plans. However, about half of the state's 436 water suppliers (both urban water retailers and wholesalers) have not yet activated Level 2, and 36 have not submitted drought plans. The emergency regulation will require suppliers without drought plans to take certain conservation actions, such as conducting outreach to customers about conservation, restricting outdoor irrigation to two days a week and enforcing against wasteful water practices.

The approved regulation will be submitted to the Office of Administrative Law (OAL) for approval, which typically occurs within 10 calendar days. The ban on non-functional turf becomes effective upon OAL approval and the Level 2 requirements for urban water suppliers are proposed to take effect on June 10, 2022.

The regulation will give suppliers new options to reduce water waste if they choose to use them. A violation of the non-functional turf irrigation provision, for example, would be an infraction and subject to a fine of up to \$500.

People who see water waste should report it at [savewater.ca.gov](https://www.savewater.ca.gov).

The State Water Board's mission is to preserve, enhance and restore the quality of California's water resources and drinking water for the protection of the environment, public health and all beneficial uses, and to ensure proper allocation and efficient use for present and future generations.