


PASADENA WATER AND POWER

MEMORANDUM

November 13, 2007

To: Environmental Advisory Commission

From: Phyllis E. Currie, 
General Manager

Subject: DECLARATION OF A WATER SHORTAGE AND IMPLEMENTATION OF
WATER SHORTAGE PLAN I

RECOMMENDATION TO CITY COUNCIL:

In a Public Hearing scheduled for December 17, 2007, staff will recommend that the City Council:

1. Declare that a water shortage exists; and,
2. Effective immediately, implement the Water Shortage Plan I as outlined in the Pasadena Municipal Code ("PMC") 13.10.040.

It is requested that the Environmental Advisory Commission ("EAC") review staff's recommendations and provide advice to the City Council no later than December 10, 2007.

APPLICABLE URBAN ACCORDS GOALS:

ACTION 20 – WATER CONSERVATION: Protect the ecological integrity of the city's primary drinking water sources (i.e., aquifers, rivers, lakes, wetlands and associated ecosystems).

Note that the EAC must review staff's recommendation pursuant to PMC 13.10.035.

BACKGROUND

Pasadena provides approximately 39,000 acre-feet of water annually to its customers, 40% of which comes from local supplies and 60% from imported water from the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California ("MWD"). These supplies are threatened for a number of reasons, including:

- Reservoirs on the Colorado River, which provides approximately 40% of MWD's supplies, are at record lows as the region is in the eighth year of drought;
- The California State Water Project has reported the worst water year on record;
- Pasadena experienced record-low rainfall in 2006-2007;
- Water levels of PWP's groundwater wells have dropped by approximately 60 feet compared to historical norms;
- A recent federal district court ruling has restricted pumping activities in the Sacramento-San Joaquin delta, which provides approximately 60% of MWD's supplies, that could reduce water deliveries from this region to the MWD by as much 30%;
- MWD anticipates that 500,000 acre-feet, or about 20%, of its water reserves will have to be drawn from storage to meet current demand. MWD storage will be approximately 40% full at the end of 2007; and,
- MWD may require their member agencies, such as Pasadena, to reduce their total consumption of water by 10-15% if current conditions persist.

Since the Mayor's July 5th call to Pasadena's water customers for a voluntary cutback of 10% has thus far not resulted in significant savings, it is recommended that the City Council declare that a water shortage exists and that Water Shortage Plan I be implemented in accordance with PMC Chapter 13.10 "Water Shortage Procedures." Staff believes that Plan I provides additional specific measures which will result in greater water savings in order to reduce PWP's reliance on purchased water and to preserve local groundwater resources. The applicable text of the proposed water shortage is as follows:

13.10.040 Water Shortage Plan I.

All persons and customers of the department shall, on a voluntary basis, reduce water usage by taking the following water conservation measures:

- A. Refrain from hosing or washing sidewalks, walkways, driveways, parking areas or other paved surfaces;
- B. Refrain from cleaning, filling, or maintaining levels in decorative fountains, ponds, lakes, and similar structures unless such structure is equipped with a water recycling system;

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- C. Refrain from serving drinking water, unless at the express request of a customer, in all restaurants, hotels, cafes, cafeterias, or other public places where food is sold, served or offered for sale;
- D. Promptly repair all leaks from indoor and outdoor plumbing fixtures, including but not limited to sprinkler systems;
- E. Refrain from allowing water to run off landscape areas into adjoining streets, sidewalks, parking lots or alleys;
- F. Refrain from allowing water to run off into adjoining streets, sidewalks, parking lots or alleys while washing vehicles;
- G. Refrain from landscape watering more often than once every 3 days;
- H. Refrain from landscape watering between the hours of 10:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.;
- I. Refrain from filling or refilling a swimming pool. (Ord. 6289 § 1 (part), 1988: Ord. 6275 § 1 (part), 1988)

Note that the Water Shortage Plan II per PMC 13.10.045 prohibits each of the above activities and requires the establishment of a penalty schedule for violations. Water Shortage Plan III per PMC 13.10.050 further requires specific levels of water consumption by each customer as compared to their respective consumption during the "Base Year" as defined in PMC 13.10.020. By declaring that a water shortage exists prior to the end of calendar year 2007, calendar year 2006 will be established as the Base Year. Staff believes that calendar year 2006 is more representative of a typical water usage year because water usage during that year was close to the annual average.

At this time it is recommended that Water Shortage Plan I be implemented. However, PWP staff will continue to monitor water savings as a result of the Plan as well as any action on the part of MWD to implement a water rationing plan and provide periodic reports to the EAC on the City's progress on reducing water usage. If the target water savings of 10% are not realized through Plan I and/or MWD implements a water rationing plan, PWP will return to City Council to request implementation of Water Shortage Plan II or Water Shortage Plan III as appropriate. Each of these plans requires mandatory restrictions and/or specific reductions in water usage by Pasadena's customers.