

# Agenda Report

August 15, 2022

**To:** Honorable Mayor and City Council  
**From:** Water and Power Department  
**Subject:** **IMPLEMENT MOVING UP ONE-DAY-PER-WEEK OUTDOOR IRRIGATION SCHEDULE TO SEPTEMBER 1, 2022, AND ADDITIONAL WATER CONSERVATION MEASURES PURSUANT TO PASADENA MUNICIPAL CODE ("PMC") TITLE 13, CHAPTER 13.10**

## **RECOMMENDATION:**

It is recommended that the City Council:

1. Find that the recommended actions to encourage water conservation and prevent water waste are categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA") pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15307 (Actions by Regulatory Agencies for the Protection of Natural Resources) and there are no features that distinguish this project from others in the exempt class and therefore there are no unusual circumstances;
2. Implement moving up one-day-per-week outdoor irrigation schedule from November 1, 2022, to September 1, 2022, pursuant to the City of Pasadena Water Waste Prohibitions and Water Supply Shortage Plans Ordinance in Pasadena Municipal Code ("PMC") Chapter 13.10; and
3. Implement additional water conservation measures, specifically enforcement of State-adopted drought conservation emergency regulations, including the State Water Resources Control Board emergency regulation prohibiting irrigation of non-functional turf with potable water at commercial, industrial, and institutional sites as per the State Water Resources Control Board Resolution No. 2022-0018, and pursuant to PMC Chapter 13.10.

The above recommendations were developed with guidance from the Municipal Services Committee ("MSC") members' discussion at the MSC meeting on July 12, 2022, following the staff presentation on water conditions and the new statewide emergency regulations.

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

California is contending with unprecedented drought conditions with the last three years setting the record as the driest three-year period in state history. These conditions, along with severe to exceptional drought across the southwest United States, are significantly impacting water supplies, leading to critically low storage levels on the State Water Project and Colorado River systems, and declining local groundwater levels.

As drought conditions intensified, the Governor called on all Californians to reduce water use by 15 percent and issued executive orders for critical water conservation measures. Most recently, the State Water Resources Control Board activated new emergency water conservation regulations, including requiring all agencies to implement Level 2 Water Shortage Plans, and a statewide ban on the irrigation of non-functional turf with potable water at commercial, industrial, and institutional sites (see Attachment 1).

Adding to the need to save more water, the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California ("MWD") requires a two-week emergency shutdown of an upstream MWD feeder to complete an urgent repair in early September 2022. Pasadena Water and Power ("PWP") will continue to receive water deliveries from MWD during the shutdown, but as the supply source will be switched to severely limited State Water Project supplies for the duration of the shutdown, MWD is calling for a significant reduction in water use.

As a result, staff recommends Pasadena move up the one-day-per-week outdoor irrigation schedule to September 1, 2022. This action is equivalent to initiating the winter watering schedule under the current Level 2 Water Shortage Plan two months earlier. Pasadena City Council proactively implemented the City's Level 2 Water Supply Shortage Plan in August 2021, and adopted a voluntary 15 percent water-use reduction goal. The Level 2 plan restricts outdoor irrigation to two days per week in the summer months (April-October), and one day in the winter months (November-March).

Staff also recommends implementing an additional water conservation measure of enabling the enforcement of state drought conservation emergency regulations, including the recent state emergency regulation prohibiting irrigation of non-functional turf with potable water at commercial, industrial, and institutional sites.

PWP customers have made great strides in conserving water despite the increased temperatures and dry conditions. However, as water supply conditions continue to degrade, Pasadena must expand its water conservation efforts to meet the 15 percent water-use reduction goal. Since the majority of water used by PWP customers is for landscape irrigation, the greatest gains in conservation can be achieved with reduced outdoor watering. This reduction is especially critical during the MWD two-week emergency shutdown, and helps to achieve the 15 percent reduction called for by the State and Pasadena City Council.

## **BACKGROUND:**

### ***Unprecedented Drought Conditions***

As the western United States faces the impacts of climate change, a majority of the area is experiencing above average temperatures and severe to extreme drought conditions. California is in its third year of drought with all of California's 58 counties under a drought emergency proclamation. The Colorado River basin is amidst a historic, extended drought, resulting in record low levels in Lake Powell and Lake Mead, which are the two largest reservoirs in the United States. Groundwater levels are also significantly depleted in many areas of the state.

### ***Actions Addressing Drought Emergency***

As early as April 21, 2021, Governor Newsom declared a regional drought emergency and directed state agencies to take immediate action to bolster drought resilience. As drought conditions worsened, in July 2021, Governor Newsom called on Californians to voluntarily reduce water use by 15 percent over 2020 levels, then also increasingly expanded drought declarations and executive orders.

On March 28, 2022, Governor Newsom signed Executive Order N-7-22 furthering the State's drought response and ordering the State Water Resources Control Board to consider adopting emergency regulations for urban water suppliers. Effective June 10, 2022, new emergency water conservation regulations were activated, which require all urban water suppliers to implement Level 2 Water Shortage Plans, and prohibits irrigation of non-functional turf with potable water at commercial, industrial, and institutional sites.

Pasadena was proactive in addressing the drought and activated Level 2 of the City's Water Shortage Plan on August 16, 2021, and also adopted a voluntary 15 percent water-use reduction goal. This early approach and the active effort from Pasadena residents and businesses has helped Pasadena reduce water use. Expanded water conservation actions can further help to achieve the City's 15 percent water-use reduction goal.

### ***MWD Calls for Significant Water-Use Reduction During Emergency Shutdown***

PWP receives a significant amount of its water supply from the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California ("MWD"). MWD supplies 26 member cities and water agencies with water from storage facilities, the State Water Project and the Colorado River Aqueduct, serving nearly 19 million people in six counties.

MWD is implementing a two-week emergency shutdown of MWD's Upper Feeder to complete an urgent repair, starting September 6, 2022. This major pipeline currently delivers Colorado River water to MWD's Weymouth Water Treatment Plant, which serves Pasadena and other downstream agencies. During the shutdown, the Weymouth Water Treatment Plant will be receiving 100 percent State Water Project supplies. As

these supplies are severely limited, MWD is calling for a significant reduction in water use, including voluntary elimination of outdoor watering during the shutdown.

### ***Recommended One-Day-Per-Week Outdoor Irrigation Schedule***

With the deepening drought and to support the water reduction requested during the MWD emergency shutdown, staff recommends Pasadena move up the one-day-per-week outdoor irrigation schedule to September 1, 2022. As the current Level 2 Water Shortage Plan includes a watering schedule that limits outdoor irrigation to one day per week from November 1 through March 31, this recommended action is equivalent to early implementation of the winter watering schedule.

PWP has established the following schedule for watering or irrigating lawns:

- Monday watering for even numbered addresses effective September 1, 2022;  
and
- Tuesday watering for odd numbered addresses effective September 1, 2022.

See Attachment 2 for more information on Pasadena's Water Waste Prohibitions and Water Supply Shortage Plans Ordinance.

### ***Additional Water Shortage Measures***

On June 10, 2022, the State activated a new emergency water conservation regulation, which prohibits the irrigation of non-functional turf with potable water at commercial, industrial, and institutional sites. Non-functional turf is defined as turf that is solely ornamental and not regularly used for human recreational purposes or for civic or community events. Non-functional turf does not include sports fields and turf that is regularly used for human recreational purposes or for civic or community events.

The emergency regulation does not prohibit watering trees, or other perennial non-turf plantings, or the use of water to the extent necessary to address an immediate health and safety need. It also does not prohibit the use of recycled water for irrigating non-functional turf. The emergency conservation regulation is currently in effect for one year, and may be extended.

The PMC already includes prohibiting irrigation of non-functional turf on public street medians with potable water.

Should the drought continue to persist, further water-use reduction may be required by the State and by MWD.

PMC Section 13.10.060 provides that the City Council may order implementation of other water conservation measures in addition to those set forth in the ordinance, and in the manner provided in Section 13.10.035. PMC Section 13.10.035 provides that the City Council may, during the period of a declared water shortage, take actions to modify the water conservation target, implement a different level of water supply shortage, or order the implementation or discontinuation of any additional water conservation

measures appropriate to address the water shortage by motion, and without conducting a public hearing. PWP recommends that the City Council order that the following additional water shortage measure be implemented at this time:

- 1) Allow enforcement of State-adopted drought conservation emergency regulations, including the State Water Resources Control Board emergency regulation prohibiting irrigation of non-functional turf with potable water at commercial, industrial, and institutional sites.

### ***Bolstering Conservation Efforts***

#### **Outreach and Education**

PWP will implement a broad outreach program to keep customers informed and prepared. Outreach includes:

- Citywide mailer
- Press releases
- Signage
- News articles through City/PWP publications such as Pasadena In Focus and Conduit
- Workshops – in person and virtual
- Direct outreach to key customers, stakeholders, and interest groups, such as nurseries, irrigation supply retailers, landscapers, Caltrans, PUSD, City Departments, Chamber of Commerce, etc.
- Daily updates on the City's website, Facebook, and Twitter

#### **Programs and Resources**

PWP has a robust portfolio of water conservations programs and resources, including rebates for turf removal, irrigation measures, and fixtures and appliances; free irrigation check-ups; direct install of water saving measures; greywater system installations; landscape design guides and templates; and workshops and online tutorials. Information on PWP's water saving programs and resources can be found online at [www.PWPweb.com/savewater](http://www.PWPweb.com/savewater).

### ***Future Actions***

PWP will continue to closely monitor water use, including under the one-day-per-week outdoor irrigation schedule, and with the ban on irrigating non-functional turf on commercial, industrial, and institutional properties. Staff will assess progress toward meeting the 15 percent water-use reduction goal and provide updates to MSC.

### **COUNCIL POLICY CONSIDERATION:**

The proposed actions are consistent with the Water System and Resources Plan, the 2020 Urban Water Management Plan, the 2018 Climate Action Plan, and the City Council Strategic Planning Goals to increase conservation and sustainability.

The proposed additional water conservation measures will be implemented in accordance with Chapter 13.10 of the Pasadena Municipal Code. It will help PWP conserve water and stretch available supplies to meet customer needs.

**ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:**

The project has been determined to be exempt per Section 15307 of the CEQA Guidelines, Actions by Regulatory Agencies for Protection of Natural Resources. This exemption consists of actions by regulatory agencies as authorized by State law or local ordinance to assure maintenance of a natural resource (such as water) where the regulatory process involves procedures for protection of the resource. No construction activities are included in this project, which is consistent with the requirements for this categorical exemption in CEQA Guidelines Section 15307.

In addition to being exempt from CEQA, it has been determined that implementing additional water conservation measures will have no secondary environmental impacts because a significant amount of current water consumption is used to over water landscaping and runs off the target area into storm drains or evaporates before it can percolate into the ground. It is estimated that many customers over water by as much as 50%. It is possible that reducing water consumption among those customers may actually improve the health of their landscaping.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**


The recommended actions are anticipated to result in reduced water consumption, Water Fund revenues and expenses and Water Fund net income. While the degree of water conservation cannot be predicted with certainty, PWP projects the recommended actions will result in a reduction of approximately 1,500 Acre Feet of water, or 646,000 Hundred Cubic Feet or Billing Units (BUs) in water sales in FY 2023. The reduction in water sales will be mitigated by reduced water purchase costs for an estimated net fiscal impact of approximately \$1.2 million to the Water Fund.

The Water Department will monitor the water sales and revenue over the course of the fiscal year and request budgetary adjustments as necessary.

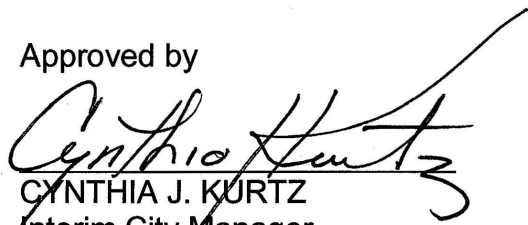
Respectfully submitted,

  
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**Attachments:**

- Attachment 1 – State Water Resources Control Board Resolution No. 2022-0018
- Attachment 2 – Chapter 13.10 – Water Waste Prohibitions and Water Supply Shortage Plans