



Media Release

Santa Barbara City Council Declares Stage Three Drought & Regulations

A Stage Three Drought Condition was declared by the Santa Barbara City Council on May 5, 2015 with mandatory water use regulations adopted on May 12 in response to the driest consecutive four years on record. The Stage Three Drought Condition requires a 25% City-wide reduction in overall water use.

The City plans for a six-year drought starting when Lake Cachuma stops spilling. Currently, City water supplies are severely reduced in capacity with Lake Cachuma at 27% of capacity and Gibraltar Reservoir at 13%. Despite extreme drought, the City is confident there will be sufficient water to meet health and safety needs, with help from the community. To offset diminished surface water supplies, the City is using Lake Cachuma water reserved from prior years, purchasing supplemental water, and using more groundwater with the help of two new wells. These measures, coupled with extraordinary conservation by our customers, have kept supplies and demand in balance.

Assuming the drought continues, minimal surface water supplies will be available by the end of 2016, groundwater levels will be reduced, and State water deliveries remain uncertain. Therefore, in June 2015, the City Council will consider reactivation of the City's desalination facility. The cost of the project will be reflected in water rates that take effect July 2015.

As part of the Stage Three Drought Condition, the City Council adopted water use regulations which include new and existing regulations for all customers using City of Santa Barbara water. The regulations are summarized as follows, for the full text of the regulations and exceptions, please visit www.SantaBarbaraCA.gov/Drought.

- Hoses must be equipped with an automatic shut-off nozzle when in use.
- Irrigation with potable water is prohibited between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. for automatic systems. If manually operated, such irrigation is prohibited between the hours of 10:30 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.
- Irrigation with potable water that causes runoff onto adjacent property, non-irrigated areas, private and public walkways, roadways, parking lots, or parking structures is prohibited. Any excessive, unnecessary or unwarranted use of water is prohibited. All leaks must be repaired as soon as reasonably possible.
- Irrigation during and within 48 hours after measurable rainfall is prohibited.
- Washing of pavement and other hard surfaces is generally prohibited. Exception: preventive maintenance of buildings and other facilities if accomplished by means of a pressure washer and when it is the only feasible means of correcting a potential threat to health and safety; provided it is accomplished by use of a pressure washer, mop, bucket, or brush.
- Vehicles and boats must be washed with a hose equipped with a shut-off nozzle or washed at commercial facilities that recycle the water.
- The use of potable water in all non-recirculating ornamental water features and fountains is prohibited. Outdoor recirculating fountains with a water surface area greater than 25 ft² are prohibited unless they are located on residential properties or home to aquatic life.
- Pools and spas must be equipped with a cover when not in use. No draining or refilling of pools by more than one third, unless authorized.
- Drought notices required in restaurants and other eating and drinking establishments; water served on request only.
- Hotels and motels must post a drought notice in each guest room and provide guests with the option of choosing not to have towels and linens laundered daily.

- Gyms, pools, and other businesses providing showers must post drought notices and promote limitation of shower use.

The City's approach to the Stage Three Drought is a phased response with initial water use regulations to achieve a 25% conservation target and to meet new State regulations. The City has identified additional water use regulations and development restrictions that can be enacted if the cumulative demand reduction of 25% is not met or worsening water supply outlook requires additional savings from the community.

The City's water customers have done an exemplary job at reducing water use and currently lead southern California in water savings for urban water providers. The City's Water Conservation Program is available to help everyone save water. The best way to reduce water usage now is by evaluating landscape watering and checking for leaks inside and out.

For more information on regulations, rates, rebates, and reporting water waste or violations, please visit www.SantaBarbaraCA.gov/Water or call (805) 564-5460. Thank you for taking action, we are all in this together.