



Jesse Arreguín
Councilmember, District 4

CONSENT CALENDAR
February 25, 2014

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council
From: Councilmembers Jesse Arreguín and Gordon Wozniak
Subject: Water Conservation Measures

RECOMMENDATION

- 1) Refer to the Public Works and Environmental Advisory Commissions the issue of California’s historic drought to explore possible voluntary and/or mandatory water conservation measures along with public education and outreach, and to return to Council with a recommendation.
- 2) Request that the City Manager provide a report to Council on the measures proposed and already undertaken by the City to address the drought.

FISCAL IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION

Unknown. Some staff time involved in the study and possible execution of water conservation measures, as well as possible savings from such measures.

BACKGROUND:

California is experiencing one of the driest winters on record that, coupled with dry years that have nearly depleted reservoirs the last two years, has led to Governor Jerry Brown to declare a drought emergency and directed State officials to take all necessary actions to prepare for the drought conditions. In addition, Governor Brown has called on all residents to reduce water consumption by 20 percent.

While the recent tropical storm dubbed “pineapple express” brought much needed rain, it is not enough to offset years of diminished rainfall. The City of Berkeley has already taken measures to reduce water consumption as a part of the City’s Climate Action Plan. However, due to the drought, there is a critical need for additional water conservation measures to ensure the continuity of the Berkeley’s severely impacted water source, the Sierra Nevada.

Berkeley’s largest source of water consumption is single-family homes, accounting for 34% of water use in 2011. Through public education there can be greater awareness of the need to conserve water and the simple, free methods to do so. East Bay Municipal Utility District offers free water conserving showerheads, faucet aerators, and hose

nozzles upon the completion of a home water use survey as well as rebates on high-efficiency toilets, clothes washers, and irrigation systems. Dissemination of this information and the promotion of voluntary water conservation methods such as checking for and repairing leaks, watering plants only as needed, restricting water use of non-essential activities, can greatly enhance conservation efforts.

Meanwhile, other Bay Area cities have explored a variety of voluntary and mandatory measures, including the City of Healdsburg, which has requested evening-and morning-only watering, a 20% decrease in water usage at car washes, and prohibiting a variety of non-essential uses of water during the drought, etc.

Additionally, the City may want to consider a decrease in its water usage to “stress levels” for turf in medians, and/or eventually phase out turf in the medians for drought resistant foliage and woodchip groundcover.

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