

TO: Andrew P. Powers, City Manager

FROM: Clifford G. Finley, Public Works Director

DATE: April 25, 2023

SUBJECT: Revised Water Shortage Declaration

RECOMMENDATION:

1. Adopt resolution discontinuing a Level 3 Water Supply Shortage, rescinding Resolution No. 2023-007, and declaring that Permanent and Level 1 Water Conservation measures be in effect pursuant to Municipal Code Section 10-2.1104.
2. Find that this action is not a project as defined under the California Environmental Quality Act.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

No Additional Funding Requested. Staff time required to prepare this report is included in the Adopted FY 2022-23 Water Fund Budget.

BACKGROUND:

On April 26, 2022, the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD) declared a Water Shortage Emergency Condition and adopted an Emergency Water Conservation Program (EWCP) for service areas that depend on supplies from the State Water Project (SWP). On April 27, 2022, Calleguas Municipal Water District (Calleguas) adopted Resolution No. 2042, declaring a Water Shortage Emergency Condition, and adopting an EWCP to reduce non-essential uses of water and preserve available water supplies for the greatest public benefit in their service area.

On May 24, 2022, City Council adopted Resolution No. 2022-023 declaring a Level 4 Water Supply Shortage with minor modifications pursuant to Municipal Code Section 10.2.1112.

Revised Water Shortage Declaration
April 25, 2023
Page 2

Throughout the summer and fall, additional requirements were received from the state and MWD and passed along to our residents including the 10-minute maximum watering allowance and the banning of irrigation of non-functional turf on commercial, industrial, and institutional properties using potable water.

On July 5, 2022, City Council approved a budget and expenditures for water conservation patrol services, and on June 27, 2022, the City entered into a contract for such services with Cobalt Security Services, Inc. (Cobalt) through December 2022. On October 11, 2022, City Council approved an amendment to extend the agreement with Cobalt through June 2023.

As a result of the above normal rainfall throughout the state in December and January and available water quantities anticipated from the state, on February 15, 2023, Calleguas passed Resolution No. 2070 suspending enforcement of the one-day-per-week watering restriction, moving from a Stage 3 to a Stage 2 water shortage, and recommending that all Calleguas purveyors, of which the City is one, maintain water demand reduction measures consistent with their Water Shortage Contingency Plans (WSCP), without exceeding a two days per week watering.

On March 14, 2023, the City Council declared a Level 3 Water Supply Shortage and encouraged residents and businesses to use the improving water supply conditions as an opportunity to plant climate-appropriate native plants and establish a resilient landscape capable of thriving with limited irrigation, and MWD rescinded the EWCP.

On March 24, Governor Newsom issued Executive Order N-5-23 modifying drought emergency provisions and the Department of Water Resources increased the SWP allocations to 75 percent.

On April 5, 2023, Calleguas passed Resolution No. 2073 (Attachment #1) rescinding a Stage 2 Water Shortage, calling for continued water use efficiency practices, and encouraging expanded groundwater recharge.

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS:

Imported water supply conditions and reservoir levels within the SWP have improved considerably since drought measures were enacted in 2022. The Sierra snowpack is at more than twice the average following the December 2022 through March 2023 storm events. Today, the Sierra snowpack is at its highest levels since 1995 with anticipated runoff that will further boost key reservoir levels and may warrant an additional increase to the final 2023 SWP allocation, which will be announced in April.

Revised Water Shortage Declaration
April 25, 2023
Page 3

The Governor's Executive Order N-5-23 includes the following revisions:

- (1) Ends the voluntary 15 percent water conservation target and the requirement for water agencies to implement - at minimum - Level 2 of their WSCPs;
- (2) Preserves all current emergency orders related to groundwater supply;
- (3) Retains a state of emergency for all 58 counties to allow for continued drought response and recovery efforts;
- (4) Maintains the ban on wasteful water uses - including watering non-functional turf with potable water.

In light of the actions taken by DWR, Governor Newsom, MWD and Calleguas, the proposed resolution (Attachment #2) rescinds the Level 3 Water Shortage currently in effect for the City and calls for continued water use efficiency measures by the City's water users, consistent with the City's Level 1 conservation measures, the base level of the City's WSCP. This allows for up to three days per week of irrigation at 10 minutes per irrigation zone after 6:00 p.m. or before 8:00 a.m., with provisions for additional irrigation for up to 60 days to establish new plants. The revised watering provisions will also support the completion of required re-plantings under MWD's turf rebate program and the replacement of non-functional turf with climate-appropriate alternatives at commercial, institutional, and industrial establishments.

Public Outreach

Staff continues to educate the public on water conservation and regionally appropriate landscaping via www.toakswater.org. In addition, the recommendation to "Plant Now" has been disseminated through full-page ads in the local newspaper and a new webpage within the toakswater.org website. Staff regularly posts information about free classes on drip irrigation and climate-appropriate plants.

Almost 900 native plants were given away at this year's Arbor/Earth Day celebration (April 15), where the City also hosted workshops on landscaping, drip irrigation, and water-wise groundcovers.

State law and City ordinance prohibit irrigation of non-functional turf at commercial properties. Staff continue to conduct outreach to businesses with non-functional turf that this spring is a great time to transform their landscapes while turf rebates are available, and water is available to establish new plantings.

COUNCIL GOAL COMPLIANCE:

Meets the following City Council goal:

F. Provide and enhance essential infrastructure to ensure that the goals and policies of the Thousand Oaks General Plan are carried out and the City retains its role and reputation as a leader in protecting the environment and preserving limited natural resources.

PREPARED BY: Helen Cox, Sustainability Division Manager
John Brooks, Senior Analyst

Attachments:

Attachment #1 – Calleguas Resolution No. 2073

Attachment #2 – Resolution Rescinding Level 3 Water Supply Shortage