

# The Fight for Water Reliability

Recently the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) passed an update to the existing emergency water conservation restrictions extending them through October 31, 2016, affecting all 406 reporting water agencies. The Statewide average, 25.5% has exceeded the Governor's mandatory 25% reduction, however, several of the State's water agencies have fallen below their individual target. Palmdale Water District has failed to meet the States requirement by falling 5.9% below the State mandated target of a 32% reduction.

The SWRCB governs all water both above and below ground and is strictly enforcing restrictions to conserve water. Fines from the State will consist of up to \$10,000 per day to those agencies not meeting State mandated requirements.

The City of Palmdale is split between two water agencies, the Palmdale Water District and L.A. County Water Works Division (LACWW). Each of the water agencies has their own unique requirements and restriction policies for achieving the State's reduction requirements. PWD chose to issue watering guidelines to the community that addresses outside irrigation.

These requirements were put in place to specifically address outdoor water usage, since 70% of all water use is for outside irrigation. LACWW has opted to implement a different approach to water consumption by issuing arbitrary reduction figures for residents to achieve.

PWD guidelines were set to make things simple, target the high water usage, reduce outdoor watering, and make small behavioral adjustments to reduce water consumption. By comparing the Residential Gallons Per Capita per Day (R-GPCD) figure, shows that in December, PWD customers used an average of 15.9 gallons of water less per day than LACWW customers.

The comparison between bills from January-September (2014-2015), shows that on average, District customers have seen a reduction in water use for residential usage. On average, a household of four may have experienced an average bill of \$52.58 in 2014, in 2015 residential customers, on average for a household of four, have seen a reduction to \$48.70 regardless of the drought surcharge.

In addition, concerns regarding property values due to drought restrictions and perceived increased water rates have been proven false with the recent news featured in the State-of-the-City address showcasing an increase in property values for residents by 8.3% for the Palmdale community. This is good news for Palmdale residents even in the midst of an ongoing drought and State mandated watering restrictions.

Recently PWD has issued penalties to those customers that have not been in compliance with restriction guidelines and assisting in our goal of 32% reduction by February of 2015. We, as a community have reduced consumption by 26.1% since June 2015, not enough to reach the State's requirements. Rather than penalize the community beginning in June 2015 for water waste violations PWD decided to issue warnings to the community regarding violations. Unfortunately, the State issued a warning to PWD and directed the District to strictly enforce penalties to those who continue to violate water restrictions.

The State has failed to invest in water resource development and adequate supply is a major concern due to the current climate and low snow pack for the last four years. Customers are now forced to rely on 80% groundwater to service their needs. Groundwater is not a reliable source due to the lack of replenishment.

One proposal that PWD suggests is using recycled water blended with raw water to replenish the water taken from the ground water supply. This project is in its beginning stages and in the environmental review process. By storing the recycled water underground, we reduce evaporation and the ground acts as an additional natural filter to our water. PWD continues to find cost efficient ways to help sustain our water resources and become more self-reliant during times of drought.

With the uncertainty of weather patterns, temperatures, and the availability of groundwater, in addition to consumption demands, it is important for the whole community to do their part to conserve what we have. The State's mandates are here to stay and only by working together, (all of us) will ensure that we meet the restrictions placed on us by the State and pull together to save what resources we have.

PWD is asking that as a community we push to conserve water where possible and only water outside on Wednesdays and Saturdays. Please remember that during these selected watering days there are also time restrictions included. On the selected watering days please keep in mind to set your timers to cycle before 10am and after 6pm, except during the months of November through March where watering can occur between 10 and 6 pm.

To report water waste in our community on non-watering days/times please call PWD at 661-456-1099 or email us at [watse@palmdalewater.org](mailto:watse@palmdalewater.org). For more information or questions about watering restrictions please visit our website at [www.palmdalewater.org](http://www.palmdalewater.org).

Remember that *Less is More... Save for our Future...*