

Making Conservation A California Way of Life Regulation

The State Water Resources Control Board has started the formal rulemaking for the Making Conservation a California Way of Life Regulation and released the [proposed text](#) of the regulation. The regulation is expected to be adopted in summer 2024 and go into effect at the beginning of 2025. ACWA and its members shared the priorities and concerns outlined below with the State Water Board at a public workshop in October 2023, and continue to share them with the Board, staff and media.



WATER SUPPLIERS' PRIORITIES AND CONCERNS

- Water suppliers support California's advancement of long-term efficient and wise use of water. State and local actions have led to significant water use reductions, with current urban water use statewide at the same levels from 1990 despite an increase in the state's population.
- Water suppliers support the development of a regulation that is reasonable, cost-effective and supportive of their ability to make long-term investments for climate resilience.
- Water suppliers are asking that comprehensive changes be made to the regulation to reduce costs, provide reasonable timelines, reduce unnecessary burdens and complexity, and avoid unintended impacts to lower-income customers and shade trees.
- Water suppliers are concerned that the regulation deviates from authorizing legislation AB 1668 and SB 606 (2018), and goes beyond the Department of Water Resource's recommendations for an efficient use of water.
- A successful regulation will require water suppliers to develop cost-effective programs and work collaboratively with Californians to make significant behavioral and landscape changes. This will require time, as well state technical and financial assistance.



RESOURCES



On Jan. 4, 2024, the Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO) released a report to the Legislature that outlined concerns and recommendations similar to ACWA's position. Access the report on the LAO's [website](#).

In November 2023, the Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) reported similar concerns. Review that analysis on the PPIC [website](#).

THE PROPOSED REGULATION

The State Water Board's draft regulation would require each urban retail water supplier to comply with the following three components.

1. Would Require Urban Retail Water Suppliers to Meet an Agency-Specific Urban Water Use Objective Starting in 2025.

The **Urban Water Use Objective** is a total water budget, in gallons per capita per day (GPCD), that is the sum of efficiency budgets for a subset of urban water uses that include:



Each suppliers' **Urban Water Use Objective** will be calculated using statewide efficiency standards for the above urban water uses along with unique local service area characteristics such as population, climate, and landscape area. The State Water Board's rulemaking will consider adoption of the statewide efficiency standards for outdoor residential water use, CII landscapes with dedicated irrigation meters (DIMs), variances, and bonuses. Statewide efficiency standards for indoor residential water use and water loss are already adopted.

2. Would Require Urban Retail Water Suppliers to Implement Commercial, Industrial and Institutional (CII) Performance Measures.

Jan. 1, 2025	July 1, 2025	20% by 2026 + 60% by 2028 + 100% by 2030
Identify all disclosable buildings in in suppliers' service areas (>50,000 sq. ft.).	Ban the irrigation of non-functional turf on CII landscapes.	• Classify all CII customers in accordance with ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager's categories. • Identify all CII large landscapes that have mixed-use meters and either install DIM or employ in-lieu technologies for large landscapes. • Design and implement a conservation program for customers at or above the 80th percentile for water use in each classification category that includes a best management practice for five categories: outreach, technical assistance and education; incentive; landscape; collaboration and coordination; operational.

3. Would Require Urban Retail Water Suppliers to Comply with Annual Reporting Requirements.

Starting Jan. 1, 2024 and by Jan. 1 every year thereafter, each urban retail water supplier is required to comply with **Annual Reporting Requirements** to the State Water Board that include their urban water use objective, the actual urban water use, documentation of the implementation of CII performance measures, and a description of progress made towards meeting the urban water use objective (§Water Code 10609.24).

For more information about the rulemaking and regulation visit www.waterboards.ca.gov.