

Making Conservation A California Way of Life Regulation

The State Water Resources Control Board has proposed a new regulatory framework and started the formal rulemaking for the Making Conservation a California Way of Life Regulation. The draft regulatory text was released in August 2023 and is intended to implement AB 1668 and SB 606. These bills were passed by the Legislature in 2018 to develop a regulatory framework to achieve long-term water use efficiency.



WATER SUPPLIERS' PRIORITIES AND CONCERNS

Urban retail water suppliers have been actively engaging with the state on its development of the Making Conservation a California Way of Life Regulation. Water suppliers continue to support California's advancement of long-term efficient and wise use of water in a manner that is feasible and cost-effective and does not impair their ability to make long-term investments for climate resilience.

There are concerns that the current proposed regulation would have very significant cost impacts on water suppliers and their customers.

The current timeline, which has the regulation being adopted in summer 2024 with compliance beginning in 2025, is not feasible. Water suppliers also need time to budget for, develop and staff cost-effective programs. Additionally, this regulation hinges on Californians making significant behavioral changes. Educating Californians on the value of making these changes in the most cost-effective manner that supports environmental benefits requires time.



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.