

WaterReuse California
Legislative Principles for Recycled Water under
State of California Emergency Conservation Regulations and
Proposed Long-term Conservation Framework
March 24, 2017

Efficient Water Use

Policy Principle – Efficient use of all of California’s water resources:

- WaterReuse California supports the efficient use of all water resources, including recycled water

Discussion:

- Recognizes and supports the Governor’s Water Action Plan, including key provisions addressing water recycling and water use efficiency.
- Reflects the WaterReuse California community’s long-standing commitment to using recycled water efficiently and not wasting this valuable, drought proof water supply.
- Assists agencies in securing public support and investment in these supplies, which can be more costly than other supply alternatives.

Emergency Conservation Regulations

Policy Principle – Emergency regulations and water shortage contingency actions:

- Non-potable recycled water, potable recycled water and other hydrologically independent supplies shall not be subject to mandatory emergency demand reductions under state-triggered drought emergency regulations or state requirements in agencies’ Water Shortage Contingency Plans.

Discussion:

- Recognizes the unique water supply benefits during water shortage conditions of drought-proof sustainable water supplies including non-potable and potable recycled water.
- Provides an enhanced reliability incentive for agencies to invest in such supplies.
- Assists agencies in securing public support and investment in these supplies, which can more costly than other supply alternatives.

Long-term Conservation Framework

Recycled Water – Non-potable Uses:

Policy Principles - Recycled water used for landscape irrigation:

- Recycled water applied for landscape irrigation would be subject to outdoor efficiency targets under the long-term efficiency framework.
- Irrigated areas shall maintain the designation of “Special Landscape” areas that receive an Evapotranspiration Adjustment Factor (ETAF) of 1.0 x Eto under outdoor efficiency targets, consistent with existing regulations.
- The long-term conservation target setting process shall include a variance procedure for agencies with recycled water containing salinity levels that have the potential to damage landscaping without periodic flushing of accumulated salts past the root zone. Impacted outdoor irrigation areas shall receive a salinity variance with an adjusted ETAF above 1.0. Consideration should also be given for adjustments to other outdoor uses, such as environmental enhancement, that may be impacted by the 1.0 ETAF standard.

Policy Principle - Other Non-potable recycled water uses:

- The long-term conservation target setting process shall include a variance procedure for designating certain recycled water uses that would not be applicable to the targets such as industrial process water.

Discussion:

- Provides an incentive for recycled programs and uses through a more generous long-term efficiency irrigation budget than other landscape areas.
- Recognizes recycled water landscape irrigation salinity challenges in some areas and allows a variance above the 1.0 ETAF to maintain recycled water usage.
- Is consistent with the existing Model Water Efficiency Landscape Ordinance designation of recycled irrigation areas as a “Special Landscapes.”
- Recognizes that SWRCB administered permitting for recycled water irrigation already requires efficient use practices by disallowing overspray, ponding and runoff from recycled water sites and that these requirements are consistent with efficient use of recycled water under the “Special Landscapes” designation.

Recycled Water – Potable Reuse:

Policy Principles:

- The proposed long-term conservation framework establishes an efficiency target for each retail water agency based upon the aggregate of: an indoor water use component based upon a 55 GPCD standard; an outdoor component comprised of irrigated landscape area, Eto and an appropriate ETAF; plus an industry standard acceptable system loss component.
- If an agency's water use is calculated above its aggregate water efficiency target, but the agency has potable reuse in its water supply portfolio, for compliance purposes the agency may meet its aggregate efficiency target by the amount of the potable reuse supply.

Discussion:

- This approach recognizes that the source of potable reuse recycled water is wastewater discharged from indoor use that is conserved through recycling. Provides a parallel efficiency standard to the "special landscapes" for outdoor landscaping which recognizes the conservation benefits of recycled water while providing an efficiency standard.
- Assists agencies in securing support for and investment in these supplies, which can more costly and difficult to obtain public support than other supply alternatives.