



# MEMORANDUM

FC 14 (01-02-07)

**TO:** Board of Directors

**FROM:** Water Conservation and Demand Management Committee

**SUBJECT:** Water Conservation and Demand Management Committee Meeting Summary for December 20, 2021

**DATE:** January 11, 2022

This memorandum summarizes agenda items from the Zoom meeting of the Water Conservation and Demand Management Committee held on December 20, 2021.

### **Attendees:**

Board Members in attendance were: Committee Vice Chair, Director Nai Hsueh (District 5), Director Barbara Keegan (District 2), Committee Chair, Director Linda J. LeZotte (District 4).

Staff members in attendance were: Joseph Aranda, Meghan Azralon, Neeta Bijoor, Glenna Brambill, Justin Burks, Keila Cisneros, Vanessa De La Piedra, Phil Dolan, Melissa Fels, Paola Giles, Vincent Gin, Andy Gschwind, Bassam Kassab, Candice Kwok-Smith, Jim McCann, Carlos Orellana, Colin Resch, Metra Richert, Don Rocha, Ashley Shannon, and Kirsten Struve,

Guest Agencies in attendance were: Michael Bolzowski (California Water Service Company), Anthony Eulo (City of Morgan Hill), Tim Guster (Great Oaks Water Company), Kurt Elvert, Curt Rayer, and Bill Tuttle (San Jose Water Company).

Public in attendance was: Hon. Jim Beall, Christophe LaBelle, William (Bill) Sherman, and Hon. John L. Varela (Valley Water Board Member, District 1).

### **ACTION ITEMS**

**4.1 MONTHLY UPDATE ON PROGRESS TOWARDS VALLEY WATER RESOLUTION 21-68'S WATER USE REDUCTION TARGET AND WATER CONSERVATION EFFORTS RELATED TO THE DROUGHT EMERGENCY**  
Ms. Neeta Bijoor reported on the following:

#### **Summary from Meeting Agenda Memo:**

On June 9, 2021, the Valley Water Board of Directors declared a water shortage emergency condition pursuant to California Water Code §350, called for water use reduction of 15% compared to 2019, and urged the County of Santa Clara to proclaim a local emergency. The County adopted a Resolution ratifying the proclamation of a local emergency due to the drought on June 22, 2021.

The U.S. Drought Monitor Report from November 2, 2021, indicates that the majority of the County is in extreme drought, and the northeastern portion of the County is in exceptional drought. Rains in October and November increased local reservoir storage only by less than 1%. Following the early season storms, the second half of November was warm and dry. As of December 3, 2021, the Sierra Nevada snowpack, a primary source of imported water, is at 11% of normal and state snowpack is 17% of normal.

Reflecting critically dry conditions across the state, the Central Valley Project and State Water Project drastically reduced imported water allocations in 2021, which typically comprise half of Valley Water's annual water supply. An additional Central Valley Project Municipal and Industrial Public Health and Safety increment of 28,500 AF was delivered during the second half of 2021. Valley Water secured agreements for about 58,000 AF of emergency transfer supplies (not taking into account conveyance losses across the Delta) in 2021 and recovered approximately 35,000 AF from its Semitropic

Groundwater Banking Program. These supplies are now being delivered to Valley Water or being stored in San Luis Reservoir for use in 2022. Valley Water has begun negotiating for additional purchases of emergency transfer water in 2022 if conditions continue to be dry.

While the seasonal recovery has begun to stabilize or increase groundwater levels in many areas of the county, groundwater levels continue to decline due to the drought in some areas. Emergency imported water supplies and water use reduction by the community have begun to help slow groundwater level declines. However, if dry conditions continue and the Board's water use reduction target is not met consistently, projected 2022 groundwater storage is similar to what was observed in 2014. This would increase the risk in 2022 of resumed subsidence in North County and wells going dry, particularly in South County. In South County, groundwater is the only drinking water supply.

Consequently, water conservation is an important strategy to help alleviate these negative impacts.

### **Drought Adaptive Management**

Valley Water's adaptive management approach to address drought will be presented, along with possible future drought scenarios. Three possible future scenarios were evaluated. The first is a median hydrology condition for 2022, which reflects a substantial improvement from the current drought conditions. The second scenario or "critical case" and the third scenario or "extreme case" both reflect a continuation of the drought and assume a critically dry 2022 and dry 2023. Staff will discuss efforts to track changing conditions, preparations for continued dry conditions, current recommended actions, and proposed recommended actions based on the analyzed scenarios.

### **Water Conservation Outreach Messaging**

Valley Water's multilingual water conservation campaign continues to promote water conservation as a way of life, being drought-ready, and Valley Water's many conservation programs. The campaign includes ads on TV, radio, online, social media and print.

In November, staff prepared multi-language radio, TV, and social media ads to highlight Valley Water's effort to increase conservation and expand our county's use of purified water. The conservation and purified water campaign will run into the spring. On November 16, 2021, staff held a media event in Morgan Hill, highlighting the importance of water conservation and the benefits of the Landscape Rebate Program. Reporters from print, radio, and television interviewed Director John L. Varela, conservation specialist Ashley Shannon, and homeowners who converted their yard using Valley Water's rebate program. On the same day, staff provided our Speakers Bureau Program presentation focused on the drought, water conservation, and water supply to the Woodland Estates Homeowner Association in Morgan Hill.

Valley Water presented drought and water conservation information to Valley Water's Youth Commission on November 17, 2021, and staff is actively working with the Commission's Outreach subcommittee to get water conservation information out to the Commissioners' peers and other youth commissions across Santa Clara County.

Additionally, Valley Water's Water Ambassadors continue to support conservation by completing Do-It - Yourself Water Wise Indoor Survey Kits and assembled over 300 in November. One of our Water Ambassadors distributed 20 of these kits at the Woodland Estates Neighborhood Association meeting in Morgan Hill. Valley Water continues to share water conservation tips, tools, rebates and programs on our social media pages, including the Sustainable Landscape Guide.

### **Water Conservation Programs**

Valley Water has received a significant increase in applications for our landscape rebates, requests for water-saving devices, and reports of water waste in 2021. The table below shows monthly participation data available from 2021. In November, Valley Water received 182 applications for the Landscape Rebate Program (LRP), 935 orders for water-efficient devices from our website and 118 water waste

reports. These are signs that people are taking this drought seriously and are taking actions to support water use reduction.

Through shifting full time and temporary staff priorities to expedite LRP processing, the wait time to be contacted for an onsite pre-inspection for LRP applicants has been decreased by more than half, from about 6-7 weeks to about 3 weeks. Valley Water is in the final contract stages to bring on a vendor in the next few weeks to further reduce the onsite pre-inspection wait time. LRP applicants have also been sent instructions for submitting self-guided measurements if they wish to expedite the application process. Valley Water conducted pre-inspections through Google Earth for all applicants who were identified as viable candidates for this expedited option.

A vendor for the online eCart to provide free conservation devices began shipping orders on November 1, 2021, in order to minimize or eliminate wait time.

### **Countywide Water Use Reduction**

Valley Water is engaging with water retailers and cities to encourage drought response actions. As of November 30, 2021, the County of Santa Clara and 13 cities in Santa Clara County have taken action to their Councils in response to the extreme drought conditions and to Valley Water's call to reduce water use by 15% compared to 2019 levels. Cities that have not yet taken formal Council action still recognize the current drought conditions and have provided information on Valley Water's water conservation rebates and programs on their websites to encourage water use reduction among residential customers.

On November 23, 2021, the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC) declared a water shortage emergency and approved measures aimed at further conserving and reducing water usage across the SFPUC's service territory in response to exceptionally dry weather conditions. The declaration includes a 10 percent voluntary reduction compared to water use from July 2019 to June 2020. SFPUC customers are responding to the declaration and have expanded outreach and education to encourage wise water use across their jurisdictions.

After months of progress, Santa Clara County met Valley Water's call to reduce water use by 15% compared to 2019. Valley Water's retailers used 16% less water in October 2021 compared to October 2019. San Jose recorded about 2 inches of rain in October, which may have helped in reaching the goal. Rain often results in a decrease in outdoor water use. Valley Water anticipates that consistently maintaining a 15% reduction in water use each month will be challenging. Valley Water continues its outreach to the media and community to encourage residents, businesses, farms, and others to continue to save water.

The Water Conservation and Demand Management Committee discussed the following: Valley Water's process in securing water (available stored or imported water), continued drought plans, surface water recommendation plan, possible future actions, engage with water retailers (invited to the January 25, 2022, Board meeting), there is a feeling of those already conserving being penalized, public outreach campaigns, and complaints on water wasters or high-water users.

#### **Public Questions/Comments:**

- Mr. Bill Tuttle (San Jose Water Company-SJWC) what is considered the rainfall associated with medium or dry conditions? Does normal rainfall at year-end correspond to medium or dry (conditions), and is scenario 1 equaled to medium conditions or scenario 2 with dry conditions?
- Mr. Anthony Eulo (City of Morgan Hill) the rainfall chart includes demand reduction of 10% is below what Valley Water calls for and what has been called for in the past, does the scenario change if at 15% or 20%? Going after high-water users can be labor intensive.

Mr. Vincent Gin, Mr. Bassam Kassab, and Ms. Kirsten Struve were available to answer questions.

The Water Conservation and Demand Management Committee took no action.

## 4.2 STANDING ITEMS REPORT

Committee Chair LeZotte reported on the following:

### Summary from Meeting Agenda Memo:

Standing Items will allow regular reports from staff on subjects that may be of interest to the committee members.

Ms. Vanessa De La Piedra reported on the following:

- The 2021 Groundwater Management Plan of the Santa Clara and Llagas subbasins was filed December 17, 2021, with DWR as Valley Water's five-year update to our approved alternative plan. Looks like we were first to submit.
- DWR will post to website within 20 days for public comment period and stakeholders will be contacted for input.
- Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) for the north San Benito subbasin will be submitted by January 31, 2022, deadline.
- Thanks to the Committee for supporting the SGMA Plans and for the stakeholders' engagement.

The Committee thanked staff for being a continued leader in groundwater management.

Ms. Metra Richert reported on the following:

Flood-MAR:

- Completing first year of work with the UC Water team
- Significant progress has been made on developing the GIS-based tool that will help identify potential areas that may be feasible for Flood-MAR projects in SCC, includes compiling and processing all needed spatial datasets related to soils, groundwater, land use, and hydrology.
- Three workshops were held with Valley Water & UC Water Team to better understand how flood-MAR can be implemented in SCC.
- 2022 work includes:
  - a. Completion of the GIS-based tool,
  - b. Utilizing the GIS tool to identify the potential pilot site, and
  - c. Conducting detailed evaluations of institutional needs and potential participation incentives for the Flood-MAR pilot project in SCC.

Ag Baseline Water Study:

- Valley Water Staff is working with UC Merced.
- In the final stages of gathering spatial datasets and ground-truthing spatial data by driving by farms throughout SCC, and next steps include analyzing the spatial datasets and developing recommendations.
- UC Merced will present an update on their work to Water Conservation and Demand Management Committee and the Agricultural Water Advisory Committee in January 2022.

The Water Conservation and Demand Management Committee took no action.

The Committee thanked staff for a successful 2021 in accomplishing many of the projects

and programs.

The next regularly scheduled meeting is Monday, January 24, 2022, 11:00 a.m.

If you have any questions or concerns, you may contact me at, [gbrambill@valleywater.org](mailto:gbrambill@valleywater.org) or 1.408.630.2408.

Thank you!

Glenna Brambill, Management Analyst II,  
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