



## 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 June 21, 2021

**DATE:** July 13, 2021

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This memorandum summarizes agenda items from the Zoom special meeting of the Water Conservation and Demand Management Committee held on June 21, 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: Aaron Baker, Roseryn Bhudsabourg, Neeta Bijoor, Sam Bogale, Glenna Brambill, Bart Broome, Justin Burks, Rick Callender, Theresa Chinte, Melissa Fels, Paola Giles, Vincent Gin, Jason Gurdak, Linh Hoang, Brian Hopper, Jessica Lovering, Carlos Orellana, Melanie Richardson, Metra Richert, Don Rocha, Ashley Shannon, Kirsten Struve, Gregory Williams, Jing Wu, and Bhavani Yerrapotu.

Guest Agencies in attendance were: Diane Asuncion (City of Santa Clara), Michael Bolzowski (California Water Service Company), Kevin Carley (City of Palo Alto), Kurt Elvert and Bill Tuttle (San Jose Water Company), Anthony Eulo (City of Morgan Hill), Tim Guster (Great Oaks Water Company), Hon. Bryan Mekechuk (City of Monte Sereno).

Public in attendance were: Annette Duerksen, Pedro Hernandez, Erica Kudyba, Doug Muirhead, William (Bill) Sherman, Liann Walborsky, and Sharon Whaley.

### **ACTION ITEM:**

#### **4.1 WATER CONSERVATION PROGRAM AND SPRING AND SUMMER OUTREACH CAMPAIGNS**

Ms. Neeta Bijoor, Mr. Justin Burks, Ms. Linh Hoang, Ms. Paola Giles, and Ms. Kirsten Struve reported on the following:

**Summary from Meeting Agenda Memo:**  
**Drought Conditions Impacting Santa Clara County**

On June 9, 2021, the Board declared a water shortage emergency condition pursuant to California Water Code §350; called for water use restrictions of 15% compared to 2019; and urged the County of Santa Clara to proclaim a local emergency (Attachment 1).

Reflecting critically dry conditions across the state, the Central Valley Project and State Water Project have drastically reduced imported water allocations, which comprises half of Santa Clara Valley Water District's (Valley Water) typical annual water supply. Valley Water has been negotiating purchases of emergency transfer water supplies; however, potential state regulatory actions pose significant uncertainty to water transfers.

Furthermore, Valley Water is impacted by the unavailability of Anderson Reservoir as a surface water storage facility for the duration of the Anderson Dam Seismic Retrofit Project, which is expected to last 10 years. The loss of Anderson, lower imported water supplies, and uncertainty over emergency water transfers can result in rapid and significant drops in our groundwater levels and resulting in the potential for subsidence and dry wells. In South County, groundwater is the only drinking water supply.

Consequently, water conservation is a critical strategy to help alleviate these negative impacts.

**Valley Water's Drought Response; Water Conservation**

Valley Water has called for water use reductions between 20 to 30 percent since 2014, prompted by a historic, multiyear drought from 2012 to 2016. On April 27, 2021, the Board voted to call for a voluntary 25 percent water conservation as compared to 2013 water use. The resolution approved by the Board includes a call for a water use reduction target equal to 15% of 2019 water use. Because water savings in 2019 were 21% of 2013 water use, the call for a 15% reduction of 2019 water use is equivalent to a water use reduction target of 33% of 2013 water use.

**Drought Response Coordination**

Based on lessons learned from the previous drought, staff has initiated agency-wide coordination on drought response, including having an agency-wide drought coordinator.

**Continuing, New and Expanded Water Conservation Programs**

In addition to the call for water use reductions, Valley Water has ramped up efforts to expand its many conservation programs. Valley Water will use \$1 million a year

of Safe Clean Water Measure S funding in fiscal year 2022 and 2023 to increase the Landscape Rebate Program's Landscape Conversion Rebates to \$2.00 per square foot and increase the maximum rebate from \$2,000 to \$3,000 for single-family homes; expand its partnership with a local nonprofit organization, Our City Forest, to offer the Lawn Busters Program to low-income community members, US veterans, and other disadvantaged community members; and develop multilingual educational videos to promote water conservation. Earlier this spring, Valley Water released a new, online Shopping Cart that allows residents and businesses to easily order free water-efficient tools like efficient showerheads and faucet aerators, and get those tools shipped to their homes or businesses free of charge. This new tool has been very popular. Recruitment of new temporary staff and interns to support the expanded programs is underway. Per the Board's direction, staff will present a summary of all the existing water conservation programs for residents and businesses at a future Board meeting.

### **Water Waste Inspector Program**

Valley Water is receiving an increasing volume of calls reporting water waste and is recruiting additional water waste inspectors to provide outreach and education in response to reports of water waste.

### **Agricultural Water Conservation Programs**

Per the Board's direction, staff will work with the Agricultural Water Advisory Committee and the Farm Bureau to highlight Valley Water's agricultural water conservation programs. Valley Water has several conservation programs for agriculture and is currently developing an agricultural water use baseline study. Valley Water's Mobile Irrigation Lab provides seasonal crop canopy monitoring, irrigation system design consultation, and irrigation scheduling decision support for those that sign up for the program. For part of this process, there is an online decision support and operational task management tool for the site-specific conditions of their farm or ranch.

### **Public Outreach Campaigns**

The current and planned public outreach campaigns emphasize being "drought-ready" and promotes Valley Water's many conservation programs. Valley Water's multilingual spring water conservation campaign includes digital ads, print advertorials in community newspapers, social media posts, videos, and radio ads. Staff is developing a new summer campaign utilizing focus groups and market research to further encourage water conservation and drive behavioral change toward that end. In addition, staff is providing water conservation messaging for Board members to present as part of Speakers Bureau engagements and supporting Board members' engagement on media interviews. Finally, staff is developing a BeHeard interactive webpage on drought conditions and Valley Water's water conservation efforts, to facilitate two-way dialogue with the

community on the drought, respond to questions, and help drive water conservation efforts.

### **Collaboration with Water Retailers**

Staff is collaborating with water retailers on follow up related to the water shortage emergency condition declaration, including working with the Water Retailer Communications Subcommittee to share messaging.

### **Collaboration with the County and Cities**

Staff recommends that a special Water Commission meeting be scheduled to further collaborate with the cities and the county on water conservation efforts, including adoption of ordinance provisions prohibiting the wasteful use of water. This special meeting and the follow up afterward should help encourage uniformity and consistency of messaging and water conservation and water waste provisions across the cities, the county, and the retailers.

The County and 11 cities currently have water conservation ordinances that are in effect today. Each has its own conservation measures. Five of our cities/retailers (Gilroy, Los Altos Hills, Milpitas, Morgan Hill, and San Jose Water Company) already have restrictions in place limiting the number of days of outdoor watering. Some other common restrictions are irrigation restrictions (for example, no irrigation within 48 hours of rainfall), fixing leaks within 5 working days, and washing cars at home only using a nozzle that shuts off automatically when the handle is released.

One reason the resolution includes a list of specific measures is, to the greatest extent possible, to have more uniformity across retailers and jurisdictions to better facilitate regionwide conservation messaging and outreach.

### **Water Conservation and Demand Management Committee Meeting Schedule**

Staff recommends discussion of scheduling monthly committee meetings in preparation for monthly Board updates on drought response. This will allow the committee to monitor staff's progress on water conservation program implementation, messaging, and provide the opportunity for feedback to staff and recommendations to the Board.

The Water Conservation and Demand Management Committee discussed the following: new rebate increase, buckets, BeHeard, more direct links on information, summer campaign, County Board of Supervisors' proclamation, monthly updates, robust water conservation program, policy recommendations to the Board, percentages vs rates are confusing, water restrictions, Water Supply Master Plan (WSMP), 2040

goals-no regrets package, AML, Model Ordinance, leak repair, Resolution 21-68 items, alignment with electeds, community stakeholders and residents, yard signs, outreach, 'lessons learned' report, reporting on tracking resolution items, monthly committee meetings, retailers' component, website or social media hits, and messaging information needs to be clear.

Public comments:

Mr. William Sherman feels Valley Water is doing a great job, but some will not pay attention, postings on Nextdoor, and an anonymous letter about wasting water received several comments (he will send a copy).

Hon. Bryan Mekechuk wanted to offer feedback on what he is hearing, moving the 'needle', finding out water usage from the retailers, could billing be done every month, people being protective of their landscape investment, water retailers being more communicative, leaks are a big deal, are there any incentives, and retailers showing comparative data would be quite helpful.

Mr. Anthony Eulo noted retailers have to report on their water loss to the State, volumetric vs. rates, drought costs, meter readings. He appreciates Valley Water's support of agriculture (who are the largest water users), conservation making it a way of life message needs to continue, summit getting participants, weed abatement, fixing leaks, reaching out to those that have received rebates, and City of Morgan Hill will be looking at the Model Ordinance again.

Mr. Kevin Carley spoke about 'lessons learned' shared with Retailers (knowledge sharing), touchpoints, engaging customers, best practices, programs, referrals, NGO's being ambassadors, drought tolerance, and he agreed that percentages vs rates are confusing to customers.

The Water Conservation and Demand Management Committee took no action.

Attachments supplied upon request.

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,

Board Committee Liaison  
Office of the Clerk of the Board