



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 September 27, 2021

DATE: October 12, 2021

This memorandum summarizes agenda items from the Zoom meeting of the Water Conservation and Demand Management Committee held on September 27, 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).

Valley Water Staff members in attendance were: Joseph Aranda, Aaron Baker, Roseryn Bhudsabourg, Neeta Bijoor, Glenna Brambill, Justin Burks, Theresa Chinte, Vanessa De La Piedra, Philip Dolan, Melissa Fels, Paola Giles, Andy Gschwind, Jason Gurdak, Linh Hoang, Matt Keller, Jessica Lovering, Carlos Orellana, Melanie Richardson, Metra Richert, Don Rocha, Ashley Shannon, Kirsten Struve, Gregory Williams, and Jing Wu.

Guest Agencies in attendance were: Emiko Ancheta (City of Los Altos), Diane Asuncion (City of Santa Clara), Michael Bolzowski (California Water Service Company), Kurt Elvert, Andy Gere, John Tang and Bill Tuttle (San Jose Water Company-SJWC), Anthony Eulo and Chris Ghione (City of Morgan Hill), Katja Irvin (Sierra Club Loma Prieta Chapter), Jessie Maxfield (CA Depart of Fish and Wildlife-CDFW) and Jeff Provenzano (City of San José).

Public in attendance were: Esther, Kit Gordon, Carl Hilbrants, and William (Bill) Sherman.

ACTION ITEMS

4.1 MONTHLY UPDATE ON PROGRESS TOWARDS VALLEY WATER RESOLUTION 21-68'S WATER USE REDUCTION TARGET AND DROUGHT-RELATED WATER CONSERVATION EFFORTS

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 restrictions 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 August 17, 2021, indicates that the majority of the County is in extreme drought, and the northeastern portion of the County is in exceptional drought. The Sierra Nevada snowpack, a primary source of imported water, is at 0% of average as of August 30, 2021, and 0% of average statewide.

Reflecting critically dry conditions across the state, the Central Valley Project and State Water Project have drastically reduced imported water allocations, which comprise half of Valley Water's typical annual water supply. Valley Water has been negotiating purchases of emergency transfer water supplies; however, potential state regulatory actions continue to pose significant uncertainty to water transfers. Of the 71,500 AF Central Valley Project Municipal and Industrial allocation, about 28,500 AF was conditionally approved Public Health & Safety water from Reclamation with deliveries of this water planned for July through October. To date in 2021, Valley Water has secured agreements for about 50,000 AF of transfer supplies (not taking into account conveyance losses across the Delta).

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 could 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 an important strategy to help alleviate these negative impacts.

Water Conservation Outreach and Programs

Valley Water's multilingual water conservation campaign promotes 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. Valley Water's social media content has seen a dramatic increase in interest due to new water-conservation posts, "Drought Ready" videos and a contest highlighting water-saving tips. The contest will run through October with weekly winners receiving a bucket with free water conservation tools inside. Media interest continues to be high for drought and water-conservation content. Staff sent out a media advisory highlighting a video comparing reservoir levels from 2017 to 2021 and received several inquiries and interview requests. The video was also shared extensively on social media.

The Office of Communications and the Office of Government Relations facilitated 13 Speakers Bureau drought presentations in August and will continue to look at ways to increase and grow the program as staff is brought on to facilitate the effort and reach even more organizations and groups across Santa Clara County.

In August, the Education Outreach team reached 99 students through 8 virtual summer camp presentations and a "Wonders of Water Wednesday" presentation, all of which include drought themes and messaging. Additionally, in August, the Office of Civic Engagement held a virtual meeting with the Water Ambassadors, who are graduates of our 3-month long intensive Water 101 Academy, to discuss ways to help educate and engage their community on drought and conservation efforts.

Valley Water continues to conduct public outreach to encourage participation in Valley Water's 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 August, Valley Water received 376 applications for the Landscape Rebate Program, 974 orders for water-efficient devices from our website (a new record high) and 236 water waste reports. These are signs that people are taking this drought seriously and are taking actions to support water use reduction.

Valley Water has also published a new *Sustainable Landscape Guidelines* handbook, which provides in-depth tips on improving soil health, capturing rainwater, selecting climate-appropriate plants, and designing gardens in Santa Clara County.

Countywide Water Use Reduction

Valley Water is engaging with local government officials to encourage drought response actions. As of August 31, 2021, 11 of 15 cities in Santa Clara County have acted in response to the extreme drought conditions and to Valley Water's call to reduce water use by 15% compared to 2019 levels. These actions ranged from adopting local emergency resolutions to encouraging residents and businesses to use less water. Many jurisdictions also activated their citywide Water Shortage Contingency Plans to immediately implement mandatory water-use restrictions and other conservation measures.

Countywide, the percent change of water used compared to 2019 has been steadily decreasing since March 2021, showing that retailers, cities, and our communities are responding to the call for conservation. In March 2021, water use in Santa Clara County was 25% higher when compared to March 2019. In July 2021, Santa Clara County used 6% less water compared to July 2019. Valley Water anticipated that reducing water use countywide by 15% would be a gradual process, however it is encouraging to see the numbers trending in the right direction.

Currently, staff do not recommend adjusting Valley Water's 15% call for water use reduction but will bring a recommendation to the WaDMC and Board if drought and water supply conditions change and an adjustment to the call becomes necessary.

Model Water Efficient Ordinance for New Development

The Model Water Efficient New Development Ordinance (MWENDO) was developed in 2015 and updated in 2018 by a task force consisting of Valley Water, Santa Clara County, cities, and other stakeholders to ensure new

development meets strong water efficiency standards. The adoption of the MWENDO will be highlighted during the upcoming Drought Summit as a call to action to ensure water conservation becomes a way of life in Santa Clara County. The Drought Summit is planned for October 23 and is expected to be attended by local, state, and federal elected officials and stakeholders representing the region.

The Water Conservation and Demand Management Committee discussed the following: cities that have or have not taken action, October 23rd drought summit, water conservation a way of life having a clear and consistent message, watering days (cities' regulations), addressing the short-term and long-term planning, Drought Ordinance, Retailers' surcharges, violation fees, watering cars-driveways, other drought restrictions, and the Water Ambassadors taken an active role.

Mr. John Tang (SJWC), Mr. Aaron Baker and Ms. Linh Hoang were available to answer questions.

The Water Conservation and Demand Management Committee took no action.

4.2 STANDING ITEMS REPORT

Mr. Jason Gurdak 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.

Jason provided updates regarding Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) recapped from the August 30, 2021, expected timeline:

- compliance still on track,
- First week of October: post the draft Alternative Plan on our website and send out an email to our interested parties list with a link the Plan and instructions on how the public can comment on the Plan.
- Oct 25, 2021, plan on walking this Committee through the updated Plan and hope to get the Committee's recommendation to go the full Board in November.

Board Resolution No. 18-04: At the last Committee meeting, Director Hsueh asked if we could provide this Committee with a refresher about the process adopted to regulate pumping under SGMA. As a high-level overview:

- When SGMA was passed, several retailers expressed concern about the new authority to regulate pumping, particularly regarding water rights.
- For nearly a year, this issue was explored in collaboration with stakeholders through this committee. The outcome was a proposed process to regulate groundwater extraction under SGMA, if needed.
- In February 2018, the Board adopted Resolution No. 18-04 that memorializes the process.
- While pumping regulation may never be needed, the board resolution:
 - ✚ Affirms the principles that help ensure continued groundwater sustainability
 - ✚ Provides transparency and certainty as to the steps we would take as basin conditions worsen, and
 - ✚ Avoid rigid responses that may be ineffective or unnecessary.
- The board resolution acknowledges that effective programs and coordination with water retailers have resulted in sustainable groundwater conditions. It also states that collaboration will continue to be the **preferred approach** to address observed or projected undesirable results, and that Valley Water regulation of pumping will only be considered if there is no viable alternative.
- The process identified in the resolution includes the follow basic steps:
 - ❖ identification of the issue and potential mitigation,
 - ❖ consultation with affected stakeholders to help develop an action plan, with a preference for voluntary action,
 - ❖ pumping regulation if voluntary action is not taken or is not successful, and
 - ❖ implementation, monitoring and reporting.
- Resolution No. 18-04 will be included in the 2021 Alternative Plan.

The Water Conservation and Demand Management Committee took no action.

The next regularly scheduled meeting is Monday, October 25, 2021, 11:00 a.m., to be called to order in compliance with the State Emergency Services Act, the Governor's Emergency Declaration related to COVID-19, and the Governor's Executive Order N-08-21.

If you have any questions or concerns, you may contact me at, 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