



Santa Clara Valley Water District

File No.: 21-1042

Agenda Date: 10/6/2021
Item No.: 2.1.

BOARD AGENDA MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT:

Receive an Update on the Water Shortage Emergency Condition and Call for Conservation.

RECOMMENDATION:

Receive an Update on the Water Shortage Emergency Condition and Call for Conservation.

SUMMARY:

On June 9, 2021, the Santa Clara Valley Water District (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 of Santa Clara proclaimed a local emergency on June 15, which was ratified by the Board of Supervisors on June 22.

The U.S. Drought Monitor Report from September 14, 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 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.

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. Valley Water continues to conduct public outreach to encourage water conservation and participation in Valley Water's conservation programs. Participation in these programs has increased dramatically in 2021.

Countywide Water Use Reduction

Valley Water is engaging with local government officials to encourage drought response actions. The County of Santa Clara and 11 cities in Santa Clara County have taken actions 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. 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. Other jurisdictions have also taken drought-related actions such as by increasing conservation messaging. On July 27, 2021, the Sunnyvale City Council adopted a resolution declaring a Stage 2 Water Supply Shortage and setting a goal of 15% water use reduction compared to 2019. The progress of Sunnyvale towards achieving the call for water use reduction will be presented.

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.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

There is no financial impact related to staff's recommendation to receive information on the water shortage emergency condition and call for conservation.

CEQA:

The recommended action does not constitute a project under CEQA because it does not have a potential for resulting in direct or reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1: PowerPoint

UNCLASSIFIED MANAGER:

Aaron Baker, 408-630-2135