



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

OC Water Representatives Urge State for Equitable Regulations

Fountain Valley, CA (December 8, 2015) – Representatives from four Orange County water agencies were in Sacramento Monday, urging the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) to adopt conservation regulations that do more than just force residents to cut water use.

Orange County residents have reduced their water use by more than 26 percent compared to 2013, primarily by reducing their outdoor irrigation. As a whole, the SWRCB ordered Orange County to reduce its use by nearly 22 percent. Mandates set for individual local agencies under the emergency regulations range from 36 percent to 8 percent.

The mandated reductions took effect in June on orders from Governor Jerry Brown. They expire in February, and the SWRCB on Monday held a special workshop in Sacramento to gather input on potential changes for the next round of regulations.

Representatives from the Municipal Water District of Orange County, Irvine Ranch Water District, Santa Margarita Water District and Yorba Linda Water District were among those who asked for flexibility in the regulations, and rules that reward agencies that have made financial investments in new water sources.

Existing regulations, for example, do not give districts “credit” for growth since the 2013 baseline, a decision that particularly impacts IRWD and SMWD. Yorba Linda water officials, meanwhile, have long pointed out they are in a fire-prone area and need to keep vegetation lush as fire breaks. Additionally, Yorba Linda’s system is not a complete loop, requiring pipes to be flushed to maintain health standards.

Joe Berg, MWDOC’s director of water use efficiency, said Orange County also deserves credit in the regulations because much of central and northern OC gets its water from an aquifer that is partially replenished by highly recycled water from the Orange County Water District’s Groundwater Replenishment System. With GWRS in place, Berg told regulators, OC residents actually use the same water over and over, but agencies are not credited for the recycling.

The board is expected to vote on new regulations early next year. Board Chairwoman, Felicia Marcus will speak at the MWDOC Water Policy Dinner on January 22. See www.mwdoc.com for ticket information.

The Municipal Water District of Orange County is a wholesale water supplier and resource planning agency. MWDOC’s service area covers all of Orange County, with the exception of the cities of Anaheim, Fullerton and Santa Ana. We serve Orange County through 28 retail water agencies.

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