CITY OF
FOLSOM
DISTINCTIVE BY NATURE

April 22, 2015

Ms. Jessica Bean
State Water Resources Control Board
Jessica.bean@waterboards.ca.gov

Dear Ms. Bean,

The City of Folsom (City) recognizes the urgency of the proposed draft emergency regulations in response to current statewide drought conditions. As provided in the emergency regulations, the proposed conservation targets are intended to achieve a statewide reduction of 25% over a nine month reporting period. The City understands the difficult position of the Board in developing these short-term solutions as a result of Governor Brown's April 1, 2015 Executive Order. Many would agree that extraordinary times call for extraordinary measures. The City appreciates the opportunity to comment on the proposed draft emergency regulations and provides a solution that is equitable across the state when comparing R-GPCD numbers.

The City has invested millions of ratepayer dollars to carefully plan and implement water management measures that have positioned the City to continue reasonable water service to its ratepayers during periods of drought or other water supply disruptions. In other words, the City has planned for its water supply reliability for 2015 and beyond through sound management and sound investments so that its ratepayers' needs are met.

The City also continues to help Californian's during the prolonged drought by requiring its water customers to reduce its water use by 20%, achieving an average monthly savings in total water use since July 2014 of 19% as compared to the same time in 2013.

We fully understand that some regions of the state face significant groundwater declines and other regions are solely dependent on surface water resources that are significantly depleted. The City has planned for these circumstances in its local region based upon the availability of local resources – the City is regionally self-reliant.

Conservation Targets

The Emergency Regulations state: "Each urban supplier...shall reduce its total water usage by [*some identified percentage*] compared to the amount used in the same month in 2013." Our City's reduction target is 32%. Though we understand the attraction of mathematical simplicity used by the SWRCB to develop these targets, the methodology ignores the complexity of water management and use in this region and is contrary to SWRCB's own policy for addressing conservation savings.[1] Specifically, this reduction target does not consider the seasonal variability of water consumption in communities with lower housing densities and hot summers.

The current Emergency Regulations state: "*These three months reflect the amount of water used for summer outdoor irrigation, which provides the greatest opportunity for conservation savings.*"[2] Folsom agrees that these months likely provide the greatest opportunity for conservation savings. From this premise, however, a 32% reduction is imposed on our ratepayers for all months – whether or not outdoor irrigation is actually occurring. The regulation proposed is inequitable during the winter months for Folsom ratepayers. SWRCB's proposed regulations mandate that the City's ratepayers reduce their ***indoor use*** by 32% during the winter months – a rate far more punitive than the rates imposed on other purveyors who live in cooler climates and more dense communities (where those locations 2014 summer baseline R-GPCD value reflects indoor use).

Solution: The reduction targets must be adjusted so that indoor conservation objectives are more equitable and achievable. At a minimum, the Proposed Regulations should be modified to reflect a second period of average R-GPCD when landscape irrigation is minimal or even non-existent. We suggest this period would be the average of use during November 2014 through February 2015.

As an example, the SWRCB calculated the City's July-September 2014 R-GPCD as 213.7. In contrast, using the SWRCB calculations, the November 2014 –February 2015 R-GPCD was 98.9. Under this framework, a November-February required reduction target would be 20%, as represented by the proposed Section 865(c)(5) of the proposed emergency regulation. This target has a much greater equity and opportunity for success than applying the summertime target of 32% to our significantly lower winter-month R-GPCD.

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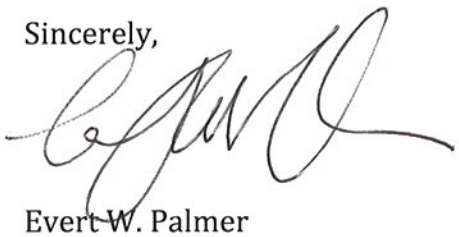
[1] The SWRCB lists several factors as part of a "Important Note" that clearly states: "*It is not appropriate to use Residential Gallons Per Capita Day (R-GPCD) water use data for comparisons across water suppliers, unless all relevant factors are accounted for.*"
(http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/waterrights/water_issues/programs/drought/conservation_reporting_info.shtml)

[2] April 18, 2015 Fact Sheet, p. 2.

Summary

As discussed above, the City's ratepayers have invested to carefully plan and implement water management measures that allow the City fo continue reasonable water service to its ratepayers during periods of drought. The City believes that the proposed conservation targets should be modified to include a summertime target and a winter target that is proportionate to overall water use. The SWRCB identified the potential savings to be the greatest during the summer months, but applies the same conservation standard to the winter months when the expectation of savings would not be the same. With an overall reduction target of 32%, the City supports the Board's proposal that allows an agency to factor in total water use across all sectors to achieve the savings. With only a single water supply source, surface water from Folsom Lake, total water savings achieved by the City directly result in water not taken from Folsom Lake.

Sincerely,



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