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New state water conservation laws set for 2019

by Steve Puterski (<https://www.thecoastnews.com/author/stephenputerski/>) © June 28, 2018

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REGION — In less than six months, California will begin to enact new statewide water conservation laws.

Senate Bill 606 and Assembly Bill 1668 call for new urban-efficiency standards for indoor and outdoor uses, water lost to leaks and appropriate variances. The bills will take effect in 2019, although there will a grace period before enforcement, according to Mario Remillard, water conservation specialist for the Carlsbad Municipal Water District.

Additionally, water agencies are required to stay within their water budgets regardless of current drought conditions. However, the California State Water Board will not enforce these standards until November 2023.

The new laws and regulations do not apply to individuals, just water agencies, according to the city of Carlsbad's website.

"The two bills, AB 1668 and SB 606, signed by the governor last week, got extra attention when conservative blogs and radio shows reported, erroneously, that residents would face \$1,000 fines if they did laundry and took a shower on the same day," the city reported on its website. "In fact, the water budgets apply to water districts, not individual residents or businesses, and allow local agencies to set up their own ways of staying within their total water allotment."

The bills direct water agencies to limit customers' indoor water use to an average of 55 gallons per person each day. The goal is reduced to 52.5 gallons by 2025 and 50 gallons by 2030. Outdoor water-use goals will also be established.

For example, according to the city, the Alliance for Water Efficiency estimates a family of four would use 60 gallons per person, per day if they lived in a home with old and inefficient toilets, faucets, shower heads and dishwasher, as well as a 40-gallon washing machine. Also included are four eight-minute showers, a load of laundry and a load of dishes each day.

If the same family replaced only the washing machine with a high-efficiency model, use would decrease to 54 gallons per person per day.

During the most recent drought, the state drew criticism for its blanket approach to limiting water use, given the wide variety of household types, weather conditions and property sizes throughout the state.

"A one-size-fits all approach doesn't really work when it comes to water conservation," Remillard said. "If we all do our part, we should stay well within the new limits."

The new legislation also incentivizes the use of recycled water, which Carlsbad has been proactive in establishing its system. The city is one of the largest per capita users of recycled water and doubled the size of its water recycling facility in 2016.

In addition, the state has incentives for agencies providing recycled potable water, although Carlsbad's recycled supply is for irrigation and other non-drinking uses. Other water agencies in the region have projects to develop new drinking water supplies from recycled water, according to the city.

The State Water Resources Control Board and the California Department of Water Resources will adopt water-use efficiency regulations, outline reporting requirements for urban water suppliers and specify penalties for violations.

Wholesale water suppliers, such as the San Diego County Water Authority, must also meet new

requirements for water-shortage planning and water-loss reporting.

The state will require urban and agricultural water suppliers to set annual water budgets.

If an agency fails to stay within its water budget, the state could impose fines up to \$1,000 per day fines or up to \$10,000 per day during a prolonged drought emergency. Since water rates reflect the actual cost of providing water service, these fines would trickle down to individual ratepayers eventually. Enforcement is not expected to begin until the year 2021 at the earliest.



Steve Puterski (<https://www.thecoastnews.com/author/stephenputerski/>)

Steve Puterski covers Carlsbad and Vista. For tips or story ideas, contact him at steve.puterski@gmail.com and follow him on Twitter @StevePuterski.

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2 COMMENTS



Joel

June 28, 2018 at 12:01 pm

Does anyone else find it ironic that the article details the "erroneous reports" from conservative blogs and talk radio shows but then goes on to explain in great detail how the regulations will be placed on the water districts not the individuals, and they are to set up their own ways of enforcing this and ensuring compliance...Like as if anybody cares whether its the district or the state who is telling us we can't flush the toilet, take a shower, or heaven forbid...water the lawn!! This state has just completely lost its mind..



Niles Fleege

⌚ June 28, 2018 at 3:34 pm

To say or report an individual household could be fined \$1,000 per day was not correct for sure. But any fines placed on the water purveyor will be paid by customers in higher rates if fines are significant. Just like what California purveyors have experienced in recent times trying to satisfy unfunded treatment mandates.

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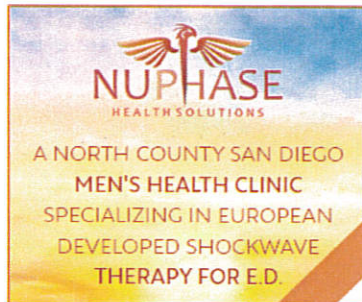
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