

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR HILDA L. SOLIS

August 30, 2022

AND SHEILA KUEHL

Urban Water Conservation Measures & Assistance in Unincorporated Los

Angeles County

Climate change-induced droughts continue to threaten regional water supply across the western United States. The West is experiencing some of the driest conditions ever recorded as the drought extends to a third consecutive year. January through March were the driest first three months in the State’s recorded history, and the State’s largest reservoirs are currently at less than half of their historical averages. Recent updates and data on the state of the water supply to the County have only underscored the need for greater commitments and efforts to conserve water resources. Governor Newsom’s proclamation extending the drought emergency statewide and urging Californians to voluntarily reduce water usage by 15% remains in effect, and in June 2022 the Governor enacted a new regulation that prohibits watering non-functional turf in commercial and industrial settings. To safeguard drinking water supplies, the State Water Resource Control Board adopted regulations in January 2022 to prohibit

MOTION

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KUEHL	_____
HAHN	_____
BARGER	_____
MITCHELL	_____

overwatering yards, washing cars without a shutoff nuzzle, hosing sidewalks, or watering grass within 48 hours after rainfall. Governor Newsom proposed \$750 million in the State's General Fund to support drought resilience and response. The U.S. Senate's "Inflation Reduction Act of 2022" includes \$4 billion for drought relief programs including turf-removal and other conservation programs in urban communities.

On July 27, 2021, and March 1, 2022, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors adopted two motions, introduced by Supervisors Hilda L. Solis and Sheila Kuehl in response to the drought conditions. In response to the July 27th [motion](#), the Chief Sustainability Office submitted a [report](#) on November 24, 2021, providing recommendations to reduce unnecessary water usage in support of community health and sustainability goals, focused on non-recreational landscaping, County buildings, recreational facilities, investments in software data collection and tracking, and community policies to support long-term water conservation. In response to the March 1st [motion](#), the Chief Sustainability Office submitted a new Board Policy No. 3.047-Water Conservation to demonstrate the County's commitment to ensuring that water is used efficiently at County facilities and that water uses are prioritized based on alignment with County sustainability goals.

The fact that the previous drought ended just a few years ago illustrates the reality that drought cycles are becoming more pronounced and frequent and will continue to do so as climate change intensifies. The County's Climate Vulnerability Assessment found that drought and mega-drought will become more likely because of rising temperatures and shifting precipitation patterns. Lack of water will not only harm water supply and treatment systems but also other infrastructure and physical assets that rely on water—

notably, power plants and parks. Communities that rely on a single-source or small water service providers could lose direct access to clean water. Moreover, between mid and end of century, climate models project more than a 65% increase of megadrought events. Adapting to this future requires long-term changes in behavior and reimagining what we consider to be necessary uses of water.

To assist in informing County residents about water, Public Works created Water for LA County at <https://waterforla.com> . Water for LA County's current campaign, My Journey with Water, aims to inform County residents of the origins of water they utilize and empower them to become water advocates dedicated to sustainability and health for all.

WE THEREFORE MOVE that the Board of Supervisors

1. Adopt Board Policy No. 3047- Water Conservation as well as the recommendations from the Board Letter as follows:
 - a. Direct Department of Public Works, Department of Parks and Recreation, and Internal Services Department to explore state and federal funding as well as programs available through local water agencies such as the Metropolitan Water District to support turf removal and replacement and other water efficiency upgrades; and
 - b. Instruct all County Departments that manage landscaping contracts to report back in writing within six months with identification and quantification of non-functional turf areas in their facilities and a prioritized plan for replanting these areas consistent with the requirements in the new Board Policy.
2. Direct the Chief Sustainability Office, in coordination with County Counsel, and the Departments of Public Works and Regional Planning, to report back within 120 days with recommendations for updating the County's 2014 water conservation ordinance with permanent water conservation measures for outdoor water use in unincorporated areas of Los Angeles County, such as requiring water efficient irrigation systems, multi-benefit landscape design, limits on washing of sidewalks and cars, banning non-functional turf, and other recommendations from the November 24, 2021 report back.
3. Direct the Department of Public Works to publish within 90 days a resource list of available turf rebate programs through local water agencies to support turf removal and replacement and other water efficiency upgrades and to notify

relevant County Departments of the information available online at <https://waterforla.com> as well as to make the information available at public-facing County facilities such as libraries and community centers; and

4. Direct the Chief Sustainability Office, in coordination with Chief Executive Office, to report back in writing in 120 days on the feasibility of creating programs to support equitable access to federal, State, and local resources to build climate resilience in communities, including providing low to moderate income residents with financial assistance as they remove their existing turf and to replace it with native & drought tolerant landscaping that meet the requirements of the ordinance. The report should include the Chief Executive Office's fiscal analysis on possible funding streams for this program, once the Chief Sustainability Office has developed program options for consideration.

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HLS:ap