

LEGISLATIVE DIGEST

[Administrative Code - Water Conservation Reporting by City Departments]

Ordinance amending the Administrative Code to require City departments to report information to the Public Utilities Commission regarding water conservation efforts.

Existing Law

Proposed Chapter 63A is new. Section 709 of the Environment Code requires City departments to undertake water conservation retrofitting activities for plumbing fixtures in buildings under each department's jurisdiction. City departments must comply with the Water Efficient Irrigation Ordinance requirements set forth in Chapter 63 of the Administrative Code.

Amendments to Current Law

This ordinance adds Chapter 63A to the Administrative Code, and requires all City departments to report the following information to San Francisco Public Utilities Commission within 90 days of the effective date of the ordinance:

- (1) A summary of all water-saving practices the department implemented to address water use reduction requirements during the 2014-2017 drought.
- (2) The name and contact information of the department representative or representatives responsible for implementing the requirements of the ordinance.
- (3) An inventory of the department's plumbing fixtures that do not meet the requirements of Section 709 of the Environment Code.
- (4) An inventory of landscape areas, as defined in Section 63.3 of the Administrative Code, under the jurisdiction of the department.

The ordinance also provides that the ten City departments with the highest water consumption in fiscal year 2017 must submit to the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission a drought response plan that includes the following information, within 180 days of the effective date of the ordinance:

- (1) The indoor and outdoor temporary water reduction measures the department would take when water rationing or reduction in excess of 20% is imposed by an action of the State or the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission;
- (2) The order in which the department anticipates it would implement the water reduction measures necessary to meet rationing or reduction requirements; and
- (3) The estimated percent reduction in departmental water use the department could achieve by implementing the water reduction measures.

The departments must implement the drought response plans during drought shortage conditions when rationing or reductions are required by State or San Francisco Public Utilities Commission action. Each department must review its drought response plan every five years, and update the plans as necessary.

Background Information

San Franciscans have some of the lowest rates of water use in California. Notwithstanding low per capita consumption rates, San Francisco must plan how it will respond during prolonged drought conditions. Reducing water demand through conservation, diversifying supplies, and expanding onsite reuse opportunities are important steps to building a more climate-resilient water supply system. Cities like San Francisco can also develop drought response plans for the municipal agency water system users. City departments, as major water users, should be prepared for scenarios where conservation alone will not be enough to prevent water shortage concerns.

The three-year period from October 2011 to September 2014 was the driest in California's hydrologic record and, as a result, reservoir storage, snowpack, and reservoir inflows were significantly lower than normal throughout the State. The unprecedented dry weather conditions prompted the Governor to declare a drought emergency for the State of California while new emergency regulations issued by the State Water Resources Control Board required the City to implement outdoor water waste restrictions and impose mandatory reductions in outdoor water use.

The City issued a directive calling for all customers of the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission's Hetch Hetchy Regional Water System to voluntarily reduce water use by at least 10%. The Mayor's Office issued Executive Directive 14-01 requiring all City departments to develop individual water conservation plans and take immediate steps to achieve a mandatory 10% reduction in their water consumption.

While the 2014 emergency drought directives were lifted for most areas of the State in April 2017, requirements for water suppliers to report monthly water use and implement outdoor water waste prohibitions have continued and are expected to become permanent. Additionally, in 2016, the Governor directed the State to develop and transition to a long-term water use efficiency framework that makes "water conservation a California way of life." (Executive Order B-37-16 dated May 9, 2016).

In response to the Mayor's Executive Directive 14-01, most City departments have submitted water conservation plans and fixture inventories. Through these and other actions, City departments have reduced their water use by 30%, comparing the volume used during 2017 to water used during 2013.