

LEGISLATIVE DIGEST

[Building, Plumbing Codes - Permit Exemption for Installation of Simple Gray Water Systems]

Ordinance amending the Building and Plumbing Codes to exempt the installation of simple gray water systems from the requirement to obtain a permit; and affirming the Planning Department's determination under the California Environmental Quality Act.

Existing Law

Building Code Section 106A.2 lists the work that is exempt from needing a building permit. Plumbing Code Section 103.1.1 lists the work that is exempt from needing a plumbing permit.

Amendments to Current Law

The Building and Plumbing Codes are amended to exempt from the permit requirement simple gray water systems that meet the Public Utilities Commission guidelines for the design of outdoor irrigation systems using graywater.

Background Information

The Governor of California has issued multiple successive Executive Orders proclaiming a statewide drought, and ordering water districts to take action to meet deep conservation goals, specifically including accelerated use of technologies such as onsite reuse systems. The evidence suggests that household gray water reuse for irrigation poses a negligible public health hazard and there is a general trend, both nationally and in California, towards a more permissive standard for gray water irrigation. An increasing number of Western states, including Arizona, Nevada, Utah, and Wyoming, are shifting from proscriptive standards to either exempting gray water systems from the permit requirement or granting a general, statewide permit to gray water systems that meet a short list of proven, reasonable performance standards.

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