



# Media Release

## State Water Board adopts emergency water use regulations to boost drought resilience

*Despite early winter storms, California remains in a drought*

January 4, 2022

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**SACRAMENTO** – As climate change-fueled extreme weather continues to disrupt our water system, the State Water Resources Control Board today adopted an [emergency regulation](#) that prohibits certain wasteful water use practices statewide and encourages Californians to monitor their water use more closely while building habits to use water wisely.

Among the wasteful water practices included are irrigating ornamental landscapes when it's raining, using potable water to clean hard surfaces or driveways, and the use of ornamental fountains. The regulation stems from Governor Newsom's [Emergency Drought Proclamation](#) on October 19, 2021, which expanded the drought emergency statewide and encouraged the State Water Board to supplement voluntary conservation measures by prohibiting certain wasteful water uses. Prohibited use regulations are not new in California. Similar regulations were in place during the state's last severe drought. In some areas, they were made permanent through local action.

"Climate change is challenging us to build drought resilience in our water infrastructure and management practices and at an individual level in our daily habits," said E. Joaquin Esquivel, chair of the State Water Board. "Prohibiting wasteful water practices increases awareness of water as a precious resource no matter what type of weather we are experiencing in a given moment, because weather extremes are now part of our climate reality."

The prohibitions apply to specific uses and apply to all water users, including individuals, business and public agencies, and can be enforced through warning letters, water audits or fines. The prohibitions will remain in place for one year unless extended, modified or removed. They help ensure that Homeowners' Associations (HOAs), cities and counties don't unlawfully restrain homeowners from taking water conservation actions. Even without the emergency regulation, it is illegal for HOAs to prevent water conservation during a drought emergency, but the regulation allows for monetary penalties for certain violations of existing law.





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The board has the authority to impose monetary penalties, and the regulation makes the prohibitions infractions, which may be enforceable by local governments or other agencies that have the authority to enforce infractions.

The emergency regulation takes effect within ten days once approved by the Office of Administrative Law and filed with the Secretary of State.

The easiest and most helpful way a person may file a complaint of water waste is by accessing <https://savewater.ca.gov>.

*The State Water Board's mission is to preserve, enhance and restore the quality of California's water resources and drinking water for the protection of the environment, public health, and all beneficial uses, and to ensure proper resource allocation and efficient use for the benefit of present and future generations.*

## Drought Water Conservation Emergency Regulation – January 2022

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The State Water Board finds that an emergency exists due to severe drought conditions and that adoption of emergency regulations is necessary. During 2021, Governor Newsom proclaimed a drought state of emergency for all counties in California, culminating, to date, with his October 19, 2021 proclamation, urging Californians to step up their water conservation efforts. Immediate action is needed to ensure all Californians are taking sufficient actions to conserve water and preserve the State's water supply. On January 4, 2022, the State Water Board adopted an emergency regulation by resolution. **On January 18, 2022, the emergency regulation became effective.** It will remain in effect for one year from the effective date, unless the State Water Board acts to end, modify, or readopt it.

### **Emergency Regulation Requirements (more in the documents below)**

- Turn off decorative water fountains
- Turn off/pause your irrigation system when it's raining and for two days after rain
- Use an automatic shutoff nozzle on your water hose
- Use a broom, not water, to clean sidewalks and driveways
- Give trees just what they need: avoid overwatering