

Valley cities could see steep residential water cuts under state plan

By Robert
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This is the end product at the city of Fresno's water treatment plant on Chestnut near Behymer in northeast Fresno, pure treated water. Photographed on Sept. 18, 2013.

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Valley water use, conservation goals

Valley urban water agencies would have among the highest water reduction targets under a proposal this week from the State Water Resources Control Board.

Water agency	Conservation Standard	Daily per-capita home water use (in gallons), Sept. 2014
Reedley	25%	128.8
Fresno	25%	134.9
Tulare	25%	144.7
Sanger	25%	149.6
Porterville	25%	164.0
Madera	25%	164.8
Dinuba	35%	169.8
Hanford	35%	173.6
Lemoore	35%	173.7
Selma*	35%	175.8
Visalia*	35%	176.6
Exeter	35%	194.4
Kerman	35%	194.7
Corcoran	35%	228.4
Los Banos	35%	229.2
Clovis	35%	229.8
Bakman Water Company	35%	277.3
Merced	35%	279.6
Madera County	35%	298.4
Kingsburg	35%	308.0

*Served by California Water Service Co.

Source: State Water Resources Control Board

- *Several central San Joaquin Valley communities may be required to conserve 35% of their residential water use under proposed state conservation goals.*
- *The State Water Resources Control Board's plan would set conservation goals between 10% and 35% for*

communities.

- *Cities that have shown they are conserving water will have lower goals than those that have not.*

Gov. Jerry Brown may have ordered a 25% cut in water use statewide due to the ongoing drought, but a host of Valley cities could have to do even more.

Clovis, Visalia and Hanford are among the Valley's biggest water users, and as a result, may have to meet a 35% water conservation goal under a proposed plan released this week by the State Water Resources Control Board.

The biggest user in the central San Joaquin Valley ? According to state officials, that would be Kingsburg, at over 300 gallons per person per day. By comparison, Fresno's residents use 135 gallons a day.

The draft plan, released Tuesday, sets water reduction targets for cities throughout the state as part of the effort to stretch California's dwindling water supply. The state is in its fourth year of a historic drought and Brown has enacted emergency measures to slash the state's overall urban water usage by 25%.

As part of that plan, the board is proposing a series of conservation targets for communities based on how good a job they have been doing to save water. It looked at the amount of water saved from June 2014 to February 2015 and compared that to a comparable period in 2013, the baseline year.

The board has created a sliding scale so communities that have been conserving water will have lower goals than those that haven't significantly conserved this past year, or over the last decade since the last major drought.

The board's conservation goals range from 10% to 35%. Valley communities with the highest per-capita residential water use in September, and who would get a 35% goal, were Kingsburg, Madera County and Merced. Kingsburg's residential per-capita use in September was 308 gallons while the city of Reedley was 128 gallons.

George Kostyrko, spokesman for the board, said the agency will accept public comment on the proposal for a week as it prepares emergency conservation regulations. The board is expected to vote on those regulations in early May.

Kostyrko said that the state will want to see communities moving towards meeting their conservation goals by the summer.

Clovis may have to meet a 35% conservation target. It conserved only 10% of its water usage from June 2014 to February 2015.

Lisa Koehn, assistant public utilities director in Clovis, said the city can do better at reducing its water usage, adding that one possible outcome may be cutting back on the number of outdoor watering days. Clovis residents can still water three days a week. Fresno allows its residents to water only two days a week.

"We will have to give outdoor watering some thought," she said. "We will be talking to the council about this soon."

Koehn said that while meeting the 35% conservation goal is achievable, it won't be easy.

"People have a lot of money invested in their landscape and some will lose their turf," Koehn said. "It just gets too hot here in the summer."

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