

# Clovis will start fining residents for excess water use because of new state rules

By Marc Benjamin

Landscaping in a Clovis subdivision that's sprinkled with reclaimed water.

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Clovis City Council meets at 6 p.m. Monday in Clovis City Council Chambers, 1033 Fifth St.

Clovis plans to reduce watering days for residents and institute fines to limit city water consumption and meet state guidelines.

The 36% reduction the state wants compares with 2013 and even though city officials say they have enough water to meet normal consumption, the statewide drought and new rules are forcing the city to slash water use and penalize those who water too much. The regulations, [to be voted on by the City Council on Monday night](#), will go into effect on June 1.

In 2014, the city of 102,000 cut its water consumption from more than 27,000 to 25,000 acre feet, nearly 10%. This year, the state's cut will mean the city can use 17,600 acre feet.

The city plans to institute fines based on water meter readings taken for bills, which are issued every two months. The city is calculating bills so each water customer will know the amount of water they can use before being fined, said Lisa Koehn, assistant public utilities director. The fines will be \$25 for a first offense and \$50 thereafter.

The watering reductions will affect the city's revenues, Koehn said, because water rates are based on usage tiers — use more, pay more.

## [DATA: Compare Valley water consumption, conservation.](#)

Clovis has invested about \$130 million in a new water treatment plant with a water allocation from Fresno Irrigation District to boost supplies, built a sewage treatment and water recycling facility, as well as a water bank near Kerman. The city will tap its water bank for 3,000 acre feet for the first time this summer.

"We have been storing water just for this eventuality," said City Manager Robert Woolley.

Allowing the city to use its banking facility water and recycled water would significantly reduce the percentage of cuts required by the state, Woolley said.



The city already is using water from the water recycling facility at Sierra Meadows and Pasa Tiempo parks, and at Clovis Community Medical Center. Any recycled water used does not count against the city's 36% reduction. Also, the city is seeking state recognition for banked water not to count against the city's supply as the new state rules go into effect.

The city could potentially generate 3,000 acre feet of recycled water annually from the water recycling facility at the sewage treatment plant, Woolley said.

Most city parks and landscaped areas will brown, Koehn said, but the city will try to keep its trees alive and is considering investing in drip irrigation to sustain its park trees. For homeowners, the city will be far more lenient in issuing citations for residents whose yards are brown and unsightly, Koehn said.

The state's cuts frustrate City Council Member Harry Armstrong, who said Clovis has been ahead of other cities in water banking and water recycling.

"We have the water and they're penalizing us," he said.

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