

Editorial: City leaders walk the walk on water

By The Bee Editorial Board

For the most part, Fresno's mayor and council members are personally observing the spirit of the water regulations they have asked residents to live by as we work through the fourth year of California's drought.

Residential watering is far from being the largest water user in the state, but cutting back on landscaping and lawn watering is a symbol that we are all doing our part. The Bee's checked out the homes of our elected officials this week and they passed the test, although Council Member Lee Brand's lawn is green and Council Member Steve Brandau lives in a nicely tended apartment complex.

District 6 Council Member Lee Brand attributes his green lawn to the lack of scorching weather this spring — not to overwatering. He says it will turn brown when the hot weather arrives. | JOHN WALKER
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The state is requiring that Fresno reduce water use by 28% over 2013 usage, and City Hall has adopted an emergency water-conservation ordinance to move toward that mandate.

Interestingly, Mayor Ashley Swearengin said in her State of the City speech Wednesday that if the "2,000 people who are watering everyday" would follow the twice-week restriction, Fresno would meet the 28% goal.

"We're following the rules, and we're making a gesture toward watering," said Council Member Clint Olivier. . . "But people want to know if their representatives are practicing what they preach, and I feel confident that residents in District 7 can look at my lawn and know that Clint is not a water waster. We don't frown on brown."

Council members also are doing what their constituents are doing — fixing broken sprinklers, switching to drought-tolerant plants, using indoor "gray water" to water outdoor plants.

As we move toward the hot Fresno summer, most of Fresno's residential lawns will likely will be brown because the twice weekly watering schedule won't overcome a string of 100-degree days.

But that's a small price to pay to save water during the drought.

