

Highlands Mutual Water Company

Drought Contingency Plan

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Highlands Mutual Water Company
14580 Lakeshore Dr
Clearlake, CA 95422
(707) 994-2393

Drought Contingency Plan

Introduction

Provided herein is Highlands Mutual Water Company's Drought Contingency Plan. Water table levels are critically low and weather experts are predicting very little rainfall this year. This causing a continuation of the drought conditions we have been experiencing periodically over the last two decades. The primary goal of this Drought Contingency Plan is to promptly and carefully protect our water supply and system for our customers.

Water Systems

Our company services nearly 3000 connections within the City of Clearlake and our sole water source is Clearlake (the Lake). We have 4 water storage tank locations and over 42 miles of main line pipe throughout our service area.

System Background

Our Company was founded in 1925 making us the oldest water company within the City of Clearlake. We have proudly served this community with safe, high quality drinking water, while accommodating consumer needs with distinguished customer service for 96 years.

Average Water Demand

Demand is determined from evaluation of historical use and production data. This is utilized to determine each stage and the level of conservation needed to maintain a sufficient supply.

Goals and Triggers

The goals and triggers are the basis for when to implement various stages of the Drought Contingency Plan. The information obtained from condition assessments and water use is used to set the conservation goals. This information, combined with the practical experience of the water treatment plant operators, are used to set the triggers (or stages) of the Plan. The triggers are developed based on use, storage, supply condition, lake levels, and public safety requirements.

At such time there is a potential threat to the supply (the Lake), Stage 1 of the Drought Contingency Plan will be implemented. This stage is to alert the community and ask all customers to comply with voluntary conservation measures. During Stage 1, all customers will also be required to comply with any and all State regulations and requirements concerning conservation. This will include but is not limited to prohibited uses, limited landscape watering, and mandatory reductions in usage.

During Stage 1, the system's capacity and consumption will be monitored closely, and in the event the potential threat is not alleviated or worsens, at the sole discretion of Management, Stage 2 will be enacted. Once Stage 2 is declared, a plan will be provided to monitor and report on the system. At that time, staff will establish Stage 3 and 4 triggers and actions needed to meet worsening conditions. These stages are typically seasonal, however, if Lake County experiences additional dry periods, or ongoing capacity issues, these stages could remain in effect for a longer period of time.

Stages

Stage 1 – Voluntary conservation and compliance with State conservation regulations and requirements. Emphasis on community awareness and outreach.

Stage 2 – Initiate mandatory conservation measures (implement of a surcharge for violations must be through a “Water Waste” Urgency Ordinance).

Stage 3 – Through additional Urgency Ordinances, implement additional mandatory conservation measures including but not limited to revised water rates (base and usage) to financially discourage non-essential water use and surcharges for usage over designated threshold.

Stage 4 – Implement Urgency Ordinance with stringent consumption tiers, limits, and penalties.

Stage Description

Stage 1 – Implemented when a potential threat to capacity is noticed. Conservation notices will be sent to all customers on monthly billing statements and via electronic communication. Water use will be examined to see how much conservation is taking place. Targeted voluntary reduction for this effort will be consistent with State guidelines and requirements. Historically this has been a 25% reduction from pre-drought consumption levels. All State conservation regulations or requirements in effect must be adhered to during this stage.

Stage 2 – Implement “phased” mandatory conservation measures to prohibit non-essential water use. At the Stage 2 trigger point, the voluntary water conservation efforts have not provided enough reduction in water use and/or storage and supply has deteriorated to a point where additional measures are needed. Mandatory conservation measures may include an Urgency Ordinance implementing violation surcharges for prohibited nonessential water use.

Non-essential water use is defined, as follows:

- a. The use of water through a handheld hose unless it is equipped with a functional shut-off nozzle (no free flow use).
- b. Use of water through a hand-held hose for washing buildings, structures, homes, sidewalks, walkways, driveways, patios, parking lots, tennis courts, cars, trucks, service vehicles or any other automobile or outdoor hard surfaced areas.
- c. Use of water through a hand-held hose for any type of recreational use including but not limited to, sprinklers, water slides, trampolines, etc.
- d. Use of water that results in flooding, excess runoff into gutters and/or streets.
- e. Use of water through any meter where the person billed for the service has been given 10 days written notice to repair broken or defective plumbing, sprinkler, watering, or irrigation systems and failed to make such repairs.

- f. Use of water for filling or refilling after draining of any existing or new swimming pool, spa, hot tub.
- g. Use of water to clean, fill, or maintain levels in decorative fountains.
- h. Use of water for construction purposes (dust control, consolidation of backfill, etc.)
- i. Use of water through an irrigation sprinkler system between the hours of 10:00 am and 7:00 PM.

The Urgency Ordinance(s) can include a surcharge of up to \$350 for each day that a violation occurs. The goal of this stage is to achieve a reduction in water use and ensure compliance with all State regulations which was not achieved through Stage 1 with voluntary conservation.

Stage 3 – Implementation by Urgency Ordinance, will include but is not limited to additional mandatory conservation measures, revised rate structures and additional misuse fines to financially discourage non-essential water use. It would include surcharges for consumption above the approved threshold.

When the Stage 3 trigger has been reached, an Urgency Ordinance is recommended to be enacted resetting the maximum amount of water allowed to protect the system capacity. Rates are established to financially discourage non-essential water use. The goal of this stage is to achieve a reduction in overall water use based on the conditions of the system and projections of capacity limitations. Stage 3 conditions will be brought to the Board as an update, when conditions merit.

Stage 4 – Implement minimum usage and a Connection Moratorium

Depending on the condition of the water system and the degree of conservation observed within the water system during Stages 1, 2 and 3, Stage 4 may be necessary. Stage 4 will be implemented when a system is potentially unable to meet the demands of the customers. Stage 4 will set the maximum gallons per day per person or per household as low as needed to ensure essential health and safety can be met and the water system capacity protected. Stage 4 would prohibit new connections. Stage 4 would include a surcharge for water consumption above the approved threshold. Stage 4 conditions will be brought to the Board as an update, when conditions merit.

Public Information / Media Program

Getting our customers involved is a key element in a success of this Drought Contingency Plan. It is greatly appreciated and extremely encouraging that many customers are already practicing effective conservation measures. During all stages of this plan, we will be using a variety of public service announcements, mail-outs to customers and website updates or alerts.

If system conditions require Stage 2 (re-structuring of rates or surcharges), information will be available to all customers in advance of their first billing to further educate them on reading their water meter and monitoring use throughout the billing period. Information on how to calculate water use during the billing period will be posted on our website www.highlandswater.com.

Highlands Mutual Water Company will remain in communication with surrounding water

agencies, and all State and Local enforcement agencies during this unprecedented time. With this line of communication, we hope to retain the most up to date information and notifications for our customers.

Improvements in Supply

Historically, during drought or other water emergency conditions, system operators have been able to supplement supply with purchased water from another source (i.e., Emergency interties with neighboring agencies). Unfortunately, due to prolonged drought conditions, other sources will be experiencing similar issues and cannot be relied upon to supply emergency water.

We are working toward increasing the efficiency of water delivery. This will include but is not limited to more staff involvement with inspections of water waste and increasing the frequency of system leak checks.