



**CITY OF MARTINEZ**

**CITY COUNCIL AGENDA  
March 5, 2014**

**TO:** Mayor and City Council  
**FROM:** Anna Gwyn Simpson, Interim City Manager  
**SUBJECT:** Update on Drought  
**DATE:** February 25, 2014

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Motion to maintain the current Drought Management Program, first approved by Council for the 2009 drought, if current water restrictions are mandated. If drought restrictions are imposed, staff will return to Council with a resolution and timeframe to implement the Drought Management Program.

**BACKGROUND:**

In 2009, after the third consecutive year of below average rainfall, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation released their initial water supply information for the Central Valley Project (CVP) contractors. Contra Costa Water District (CCWD) was the largest municipal contractor of the CVP and in February of that year, the Bureau of Reclamation announced that CCWD would receive 50% of their contracted supply. In an effort to promote conservation, CCWD applied a penalty system for water customers that do not meet reduction goals. These penalties were not only applied to their treated water customers, but also retailers such as Antioch, Pittsburg and Martinez, that purchased raw water. In March 4, 2009, Council approved the implementation of a Drought Management Program (Program) similar to that being implemented by CCWD, with their treated water customers.

The Martinez Water System implemented the CCWD Program which allowed for penalties to be applied to those customers that did not meet their conservation goals. These penalty charges were used to offset extraordinary drought expenditures. The Program consisted of the following.

- Usage in 2005, 2006 and 2007 was averaged to create a baseline for each customer.
- New and existing customers were allotted a minimum of 300 gallons per day.
- Non-irrigation meters were penalized if their usage exceeded their allotment.
- Irrigation meters had to reduce usage by 15% of their calculated average or were penalized.
- Only one tier of penalty was used: usage over their allotted usage was charged 4x the quantity charge rate.

The City Council rescinded the drought restrictions on March 17, 2010. There was a 20% reduction in overall water use and approximately 85% of our customers met their water use goals. Customers who met their conservation goals actually saved money due to their reduced usage.

**DISCUSSION:**

It has been a very dry two year period and water supplies have diminished. In January, Governor Brown formally declared a statewide emergency and called for a 20% voluntary reduction in water use statewide. The proclamation confirmed what many in California already knew, that the State wasn't getting nearly enough rain or snow. Even with the recent rains, reduced water supplies are expected. The Martinez Water System, which receives their raw water from CCWD, has not applied restrictions. CCWD's allocation of water is set by the CVP and at this time, they have not issued allocation reductions to CCWD. However, the existing lack of rain means everyone has the responsibility to continue saving water. The typical rainy season in California extends through spring, but continued dry conditions could reduce storage to a level which will require restricted water usage in the future. In mid to late spring, CCWD's board will meet to assess the water conditions again and have an update from CVP on their water allocation. Based on that information, restrictions may be issued to Martinez water customers.

Staff proposes that if restrictions are required, the Martinez Water System bring back the Drought Management Program that was approved for the 2009 drought. The same penalties will be applied to customers who exceed their conservation goal. The only change to the Program will be using 2011 and 2012 years as an average to create a baseline allocation amount for each customer.

The City of Martinez Water System is urging customers to examine their water use and consider changes to help use water as efficiently as possible. The City has been proactive in publicizing the need to reduce water consumption. Information is posted on the front page of the City's web site ([www.cityofmartinez.org](http://www.cityofmartinez.org)) and an insert publicizing the need to reduce water consumption was included in the last water bill. Per CCWD, here are some ways to save water.

**QUICK FIX**

*Something you can do right now*

***Reduce Landscape Watering Schedule***

The typical home sprinkler system delivers at 10 gallons every minute. If your schedule is set to water for 10 minutes, that means 100 gallons of water are used. And that is just for one sprinkler station. Try reducing your schedule by one watering day for significant savings.

**SAVE UP TO 400 GALLONS PER WEEK!**

**SMART PURCHASE**

*An affordable way to save more*

***Buy High-Efficiency Toilets***

Toilets installed prior to 1994 use 3.5 to 5 gallons per flush. Modern toilets with a WaterSense label use only 1.28 gallons per flush. Through the end of the year, CCWD provides \$125 rebates to eligible customers for the purchase of high-efficiency toilets.

**SAVE UP TO 5,500 GALLONS PER YEAR!**

**GREAT INVESTMENT**

*A big idea for long-term savings*

***Lose the Lawn and Get a Garden***

Lawns are the biggest water user at most homes. A typical front lawn (750 sq. ft.) will use more than 28,000 gallons in a year. Replace your existing lawn with water-wise landscaping and reduce its water use by half. CCWD provides up to \$500 in rebates to replace a water-thirsty lawn with a water-wise garden

**SAVE UP TO 14,000 GALLONS PER YEAR!**

The City of Martinez water customers are part of the Contra Costa Water – Source Water Division and may participate in its rebate programs. Through these programs, residents and businesses may be eligible for various rebates. Here are 3 programs available at this time:

- Rebates of up to \$220 are offered to commercial customers to install high-efficiency commercial clothes washers in Laundromats and apartment complex laundry facilities.
- \$125 Rebates for High-Efficiency Toilets: Replace pre-1994 toilet with a WaterSense labeled HET and receive a rebate of up to \$125.
- \$500 Rebates for Water-Efficient Landscapes: Replace your water-thirsty front lawn with water efficient landscaping and receive a rebate of up to \$500.

Additional information is available at Contra Costa Water Conservation website ([www.ccwater.com](http://www.ccwater.com)).

If drought restrictions are imposed, staff will return to Council with a resolution and timeframe to implement the Drought Management Program.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

There is no fiscal impact at this time.

**ACTION:**

Motion to implement the Drought Management Program, first approved by Council for the drought in 2009, if current water restrictions are mandated.