

Lawn Watering Ban Changed from Mandatory to Voluntary, Conservation Remains Key as Drought Continues



The rain this winter has improved the City's water supply situation, allowing us to avoid the peak demand shortage that had been projected for summer 2017. With this updated water supply news, the Santa Barbara City Council lifted the mandatory lawn watering ban on March 21st and reduced the Citywide conservation target from 40 percent to 30 percent while encouraging residents and businesses to continue conservation, including minimized lawn watering. As long as our

community continues to meet the 30 percent conservation target, we have sufficient supplies for the next three years.

Water conservation remains a top priority for our community. Our customers have done a great job reducing water use by 36 percent compared to 2013, and the City has been recognized as a statewide leader in water conservation during California's historic drought. However, despite improvements in our water supply, the City remains in a drought.

Even if we receive more rain this spring, the impacts of the drought will last several years with groundwater basins taking 5 to 10 years to recharge under normal rainfall. For this reason, the City encourages the community to continue to voluntarily reduce lawn watering as one of the single biggest steps we can take to conserve water. This will allow for critical water savings and prioritizes outdoor water use to preserve high value landscaping such as trees and shrubs. The City has informational resources available to help the community save trees. Specific tree watering information, signs of drought stress in trees, watering FAQs, and more can be found at www.SantaBarbaraCA.gov/TreeWatering.

The City will continue with plans to use desalination as a supply this year, which will play a key role in recovering from the long-term impacts of the current drought. With Cachuma at 49 percent of capacity, the Bureau of Reclamation anticipates releasing a partial allocation for the Cachuma Project in April 2017. With available supply from Gibraltar and Cachuma reservoirs this year, the City plans to rest its groundwater basins. The City's water supply mix also includes imported State Water, recycled water, and extraordinary water conservation.

All other drought water use regulations remain in effect, including but not limited to, watering times, irrigation runoff and overspray, and more. For more information on water supplies, drought planning, regulations, and rebates please visit www.SantaBarbaraCA.gov/Water or call (805) 564-5460. Thank you for taking action, we are all in this together.