

WATER CONSERVATION ACT

Presented by Councilmembers Lee Brand & Paul Caprioglio

BACKGROUND

- Several hours researching other cities' water conservation rebate programs, water management policies, & drought contingency plans
- Started out as primary objective of promoting water conservation rebates & expanded to address the crisis in our parks with dozens of dying trees
- This Act is a collaboration of private sector experts & City staff
- The confluence of 6 years of budget cuts & three years of drought have severely impacted the City

ENDORSEMENTS

- The Fresno Chamber of Commerce GAC
- The Greater Fresno Apartment Association

PURPOSE OF ACT

- The overriding goal is to incentivize water conservation for all City water customers by offering an expanded list of water rebates
- To implement policies & practices to better manage City water resources – cost effective
- To develop more efficient irrigation systems for all City owned properties
- To prioritize water usage for City properties
- To evaluate alternative water service pricing strategies that encourage and promote water conservation
- To update and amend the City's Water Shortage Contingency Plan

GOALS & NEXUS TO CITY WATER RATE PLAN

- Recommendations in this Act will be tied directly to the City's upcoming water rate proposal in a few weeks.
- The City of Fresno will become a leader in water conservation, water management, and Smart Water technology and innovation.
- The City will determine our water policies and not the State of California

ENTERPRISE WATER CONSERVATION REBATE FUND

- Will establish/amend Water Conservation Rebate Fund for \$250,000 per year for two years
- All City water customers including County Island residents and businesses are eligible for rebates
- Tenants of residential and commercial properties may also be eligible
- All applicants must complete an application form
- The City will randomly audit with site inspections

RESIDENTIAL WATER CONSERVATION INCENTIVES

- Councilman Caprioglio will explain both residential and commercial water conservation incentive details

NEW CONSTRUCTION LANDSCAPE STANDARDS

- This Act will recommend that landscape standards for residential, commercial and industrial uses be evaluated and adopted in the 2035 General Plan through the Development Code

PRIORITIZING CITY WATER RESOURCES

- This Act will ask the City to prioritize its water resources and develop more efficient irrigation systems to preserve older mature trees and recreation areas.
- The City should explore deployment of a special tree maintenance and irrigation team that will be dedicated to creating and maintaining a tree inventory to identify and evaluate current tree conditions and focus on restoring mature trees on City properties.

MANAGING CITY WATER USAGE ON CITY PROPERTIES

- City staff will be asked to review best practices in other cities and the private sector in developing ‘Smart Water’ practices on a citywide basis including irrigation systems.
- Councilman Caprioglio will explain in more detail the implementation plan

TIERED WATER RATE STRUCTURE

- This Act will direct City staff to review and evaluate the legal, financial, and institutional requirements associated with implementing a water conservation pricing structure for water service
- A water conservation pricing structure is more commonly known as a tiered water rate structure
- Several cities in California use tiered water rates
- Rate structures can range from 2 to 5 blocks
- A baseline rate may allow some water customers to save on water bills.

ASSISTING LOW INCOME CUSTOMERS

- This Act will direct City staff to review and evaluate the legal, financial, and institutional requirements associated with offering water users the option to average out a one-year water utility bill using equal installments similar to what PG&E offers.
- Some tiered price structures offer ‘Lifeline Rates’ that provide relief to low income customers.
- Prop 218 prohibits Water Enterprise funds to subsidize certain customers but special funds (i.e. insurance settlement funds) or General Funds can be used for Lifeline Rates based on Council policy decision

WATER SHORTAGE CONTINGENCY PLAN

- This Act will direct City staff to review, evaluate and prepare recommendations as necessary to update and amend the City's Water Shortage Contingency Plan and Section 6-520 of the Fresno Municipal Code.
- City currently uses 4 stage Water Shortage Contingency Plan that was first adopted in 1989, updated in 1994 and in 2010.
- An examination of water emergency plans by other cities suggests that our policies can be updated to promote and encourage more efficient outdoor irrigation practices so that users of the public water system can conserve water without severely degrading landscaped areas in the community.

WATER STORAGE CONTINGENCY PLAN – CONTINUED 2

- The current policy should be updated to better assess the level of water conservation measures utilizing new technologies and innovations.
- City staff review and evaluation will include
- 1) A review process for residential & commercial property owners to apply for an exemption from certain Water Shortage Contingency Plan conditions; and
- 2) The City Manager will be authorized to approve a list of exemptions

WATER SHORTAGE CONTINGENCY PLAN – CONTINUED 3

- The Stage 2 Water Restrictions should be amended to allow:
 - 1) one day per week watering from December 1st through March 31st and
 - 2) The hours of outdoor water should be changed to 9 AM to 9 PM
- The water conservation stage triggers should be based on available water supply rather than a percentage reduction of its water supply.
- Councilman Caprioglio will go into more detail on the review process conditions and proposed exemptions for outdoor water restrictions

What will approving this Act accomplish?

- 1) It will formalize a Water Rebate Fund of \$250,000
- 2) It will greatly expand the current list of water rebate items & increase the total rebate to \$1,000 per property
- 3) It will recommend that landscape standards be included in the 2035 Gen. Plan through the Development Code that addresses long-term drought conditions
- 4) It will establish water conservation demonstration sites
- 5) It will recommend the City creating a special tree maintenance & irrigation team dedicated to creating & maintaining a tree inventory & restoring mature trees
- 6) It will recommend that the City improve its water usage management & develop 'Smart Water' practices

WHAT WILL THIS ACT ACCOMPLISH- CONTINUED

- 7) It will ask City staff to develop a budget for funding the special tree maintenance team & determine the cost to implement the Green Recovery Plan
- 8) It will direct City staff to review & evaluate the requirements of implementing alternative water use rate structures – tiered rates
- 9) It will direct City staff to review & evaluate requirements associated with offering waters users the option to average out a one year water utility bill
- 10) It will direct City staff to review, evaluate & prepare recommendations to update the City Water Shortage Contingency Plan & FMC 6-520

SUMMARY

- All of the recommended items will be tied into the decision making process when the City presents the Water Rate Study Evaluation & Rate Recommendations.
- Approval of this Act will set in motion the City's right to determine its water future by becoming a leader in water conservation, water management & innovative irrigation technology
- Our actions will ultimately improve our landscaped public properties, conserve more water, use less power & employ more efficient maintenance practices & save taxpayers
- The timeline for implementation will be between 30-90 days depending upon the item