



~~ORIGINAL DOCUMENT~~
~~SONOMA COUNTY WATER AGENCY~~

To

CWB

MAY 01 2009

April 20, 2009

COUNTY OF SONOMA
SONOMA CO WATER AGENCY
P O BOX 11628
SANTA ROSA, CA 95406

According to our Utility Billing records, your customer account type is Commercial. Please call Utility Billing at (707) 543-3150 if this information is incorrect.

Account Number: 369424511
Address: 2150 WEST COLLEGE AVE, SANTA ROSA
RE: 2009 Water Shortage Information

Dear Customer,

Due to two consecutive winters with significantly lower than average rainfall, the Sonoma County Water Agency (Water Agency), which is the wholesaler of water to the City of Santa Rosa, is projecting that their water storage will hit unprecedented historically low levels this year. In February, the Water Agency has announced it anticipates declaring a water shortage and requiring a minimum of 30% mandatory rationing from all of its water customers this summer.

In response, on February 24, 2009, the Santa Rosa City Council declared a water shortage emergency and adopted Stage 1 of the City's Urban Water Shortage Contingency Plan (Shortage Plan). Stage 1 is a voluntary program with a community-wide goal of reducing water use by 15%. Stage 1 does not change current water rates, but does prohibit using a hose without a hose-end nozzle; washing sidewalks, patios and hard surfaces; and initiates a "water-on-request" restaurant program. Customers are requested to reduce their water use by eliminating water waste and improving water use efficiency to achieve a community-wide reduction in water use by 15%.

To help preserve water supply in Lake Mendocino, the Water Agency submitted a Temporary Urgency Change Petition to the State Water Resources Control Board (State Board) requesting a reduction in the Russian River instream flow requirements. The State Board approved the Water Agency's request, but also ordered the Water Agency to reduce water diversions from the Russian River by 25% during the period of April 6 – October 2, 2009, work with its water customers in Sonoma County to achieve 25% water conservation savings, and to prohibit irrigation of commercial turf from May 1 – October 2, 2009.

While information regarding water supply continues to be updated, as of the date of this letter, the City has only adopted Stage 1 of our Water Shortage Plan and is asking our customers to voluntarily reduce water use by 15%. The City is continuing to work with the Water Agency regarding how the State Board Order will affect our customers and to clarify the definition of the commercial turf prohibition. As more information is obtained, we will inform you regarding how the City will be implementing the requirements of the State Board order and what stage of the City's Shortage Plan will need to be implemented to ensure sufficient water supply will be available for the community.

The Shortage Plan identifies four water supply reduction Stages (Stage 1- 4) and details consumption limits, water shortage rates, and water use prohibitions for each of the Stages. Starting in Stage 2, water supply consumption limits are implemented. For commercial customers, consumption limits are based on the customer account type.

According to our Utility Billing records for account number 369424511, your customer account type is Commercial. If the type of business is incorrect, please contact the Utility Billing Department at (707) 543-3150.

Based on the type of customer account, your allotment during Stages 2, 3 and 4 will be the following:

Customer Account Type	Water Shortage Stage 2 – Moderate	Water Shortage Stage 3 – Severe	Water Shortage Stage 4 – Critical
Commercial, Industrial, Institutional	85% of previous 12 months' use	80% of previous 12 months' use	70% of previous 12 months' use
Health Care, Safety	95% of previous 12 months' use	90% of previous 12 months' use	85% of previous 12 months' use

If your business is already conserving as much water as possible, your business may qualify for a variance from the consumption limit. Variances will be considered for water uses that support health and safety and for businesses that can demonstrate that water efficient fixtures and practices were in place for all indoor water uses prior to the declaration of a water shortage and, therefore, a percentage cutback based on previous use is not appropriate. For outdoor water use, variances are only considered for inadequate allotments for mature trees. To apply for a variance, you must contact the Water Conservation Program and request a reassessment of your consumption limit.

Staff members from the City's Water Conservation Program and Utility Billing Division are available to answer any questions you may have about the water shortage, your water allocation, or the City's Shortage Plan. In addition, the Water Conservation Program offers many programs and incentives that may assist you in reducing your water use. To help reduce indoor water use, the Water Conservation Program provides free high-efficiency showerheads and faucet aerators, provides a Sustained Reduction Rebate for equipment and process changes that reduce water use, and provides rebates for replacing high-flow toilets with high-efficiency toilets, high-flow urinals with high-efficiency urinals, and washing machines with qualifying high-efficiency washing machines. To improve water use efficiency outdoors, the Water Conservation Program offers a Green Exchange Rebate Program, which provides rebates for improving the efficiency of irrigation hardware and for replacing turf with low water use alternatives, provides a rainwater harvesting rebate, and offers free shut off hose nozzles. For those customers that have one meter that provides both their indoor and irrigation water, the Water Conservation Program offers a Service Split Incentive Program to assist customers with installing a separate meter for irrigation water use.

Enclosed, please find Water Shortage Frequently Asked Questions that provide additional information regarding the City's water supply and current water shortage. Should you have any further questions or need additional information, please call the Water Conservation hotline at (707) 543-3985, available Monday through Thursday from 7:30 AM to 5:30 PM and every other Friday from 8 AM to 5 PM, or visit our website at www.srcity.org/watershortage.

Sincerely,



Glen Wright
Deputy Director – Water Resources

Enclosure(s): 1

2009 Water Shortage Commercial Business Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Why are we facing a water shortage?

A. The last two years our region has received significantly lower than average rainfall during the winter and spring months. The lack of rainfall has resulted in significantly below average water storage levels in the region's water supply reservoirs, Lake Sonoma and Lake Mendocino. In addition, reductions in the amount of water that is diverted from the Eel River to Lake Mendocino have also had a significant effect on the water supply level.

To ensure that there is enough water supply available for Sonoma and Marin counties, as well as endangered fish species that live in the Russian River, the Sonoma County Water Agency has announced that it anticipates declaring a water shortage and requiring mandatory water rationing from all of its water customers.

Q. Where does our water come from?

A. The City of Santa Rosa purchases approximately 90% of our water from the Sonoma County Water Agency (SCWA). Lake Mendocino and Lake Sonoma provide a majority of the water used for our water supply system. SCWA operates the Russian River water supply system by pumping naturally filtered water from the ground near the Russian River in Forestville. The water is treated and then distributed to its contractors, including the cities of Santa Rosa, Rohnert Park, Sonoma, Cotati, Petaluma, Town of Windsor, and the Marin Municipal Water District, North Marin Water District and Valley of the Moon Water District.

In addition, the City has two groundwater wells that provide approximately 10% of our water supply.

Q. What happens if it rains soon? Will rationing be required?

A. While recent rainfall has helped replenish storage levels in Lake Mendocino and Lake Sonoma, rainfall levels and water storage levels are still significantly below average at this time. Significant amounts of rainfall are still needed to ensure enough water is available this year for all water users, including people, businesses, farmers, wildlife, recreation and the environment.

The City of Santa Rosa Utilities Department continues to work with the Sonoma County Water Agency, our wholesale water provider, regarding information on water supply storage and the amount of water that will be available to its customers this year.

Q. How will water be rationed? How much water will I get?

A. The City of Santa Rosa has an adopted Urban Water Shortage Contingency Plan (Shortage Plan) that outlines how the City will respond to a water shortage. During Stage 1, the Utilities Department does not ration water but requests all customers to voluntarily reduce water use by 15%. In the event of a further reduction in water supply, Stages 2, 3, or 4 could be implemented.

Stages 2, 3, and 4 allocate water based on customer account type. Commercial, Industrial, Health Care and Safety account consumption limits are based on a percentage of prior years' water use. Dedicated Irrigation account consumption limits are based on plant type and evapotranspiration data. Some customers may already be meeting consumption limits.

Q. What if my site is already water efficient and can't reduce water use?

A. If your business is already conserving as much water as possible, including all indoor water using fixtures are high efficiency and all processes use water as efficiently as possible, your business may qualify for a variance from the consumption limit. To apply for a variance, you must contact the Water Conservation Program and request a reassessment of your consumption limit. Reassessments will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the Director of Utilities. Variances will be considered for water uses that support health and safety and for businesses that can demonstrate that water efficient fixtures and practices were in place for all indoor water uses prior to the declaration of a water shortage and therefore a percentage cutback based on previous use is not appropriate. For outdoor water use, variances are only considered for inadequate allotments for mature trees. For additional information on variances or to request a reassessment, please contact the Water Conservation Program at (707) 543-3985.

Q. How will water rates be affected?

A. The Shortage Plan includes a proposed water shortage rate structure based on modifications to the current water rate structure. The water shortage rate structure is designed to encourage customers to reduce water use per consumption limits and to reward customers for using water per the consumption limits. The water shortage rate structure includes a Water Shortage Charge added to all water sold when mandatory rationing is in effect and an Excess Use Charge applied during Stage 3 and Stage 4 water shortages on all water used above consumption limits. On April 21st, the Santa Rosa City Council will hold a public hearing to consider adoption of the proposed water shortage rate structure.

Q. How will my bill be affected during a water shortage?

A. Customers who reduce their water usage per the consumption limits should expect to see a decrease in the water portion of their monthly utility bill.

Q. What happens if I use more water than my allotment?

A. During a Stage 2 water shortage, there is no monetary penalty for exceeding your consumption limits. During Stages 3 and 4 of a water shortage, an Excess Use Charge is applied to all water used above the consumption limits.

During Stages 2, 3 and 4 of a water shortage, there are additional penalties for customers who repeatedly use water in excess of the consumption limits. If customers exceed their allotment for 3 consecutive months or for 6 months out of a 12 month period, the Utilities Department could require customers to have a water audit and install water conserving devices, install a flow reducer at the water meter, or could disconnect water service. Staff from the Utilities Department and Water Conservation Program are available to help customers understand the consumption limits, provide recommendations to reduce water use per the consumption limits, and to provide information on water conservation rebates and incentive programs.

Q. How are other cities affected? How come rationing is different in each city?

A. Every water supplier is affected by water supply shortages differently. Some water providers have the ability to store greater volumes of water or have access to more local supplies, such as groundwater or recycled water. Water use and customer type also

varies from water supplier to water supplier. To respond to dry conditions, water suppliers in California have Urban Water Shortage Contingency Plans, which define actions to meet anticipated water supply shortfalls of up to 50%.

In our region, the SCWA supplies water to its contractors, including the cities of Santa Rosa, Rohnert Park, Sonoma, Cotati, Petaluma, Town of Windsor, and the Marin Municipal Water District, North Marin Water District and Valley of the Moon Water District. Reductions in the amount of water that SCWA can provide this year will only affect SCWA's contractors. Each one has different sources of local supply and will be responding to the water supply reductions based on their Urban Water Shortage Contingency Plan.

Q. How do I check my water usage?

A. One way to determine your water usage prior to receiving your monthly water bill is to read your water meter. Your water meter is typically located in a concrete box labeled "WATER," near the street in front of your business. Businesses can have multiple meters on-site, including meters providing water to the inside of the building and meters providing irrigation water use. Typically, irrigation meters will have a backflow next to the meter on the property side. You can also look at the meter number and compare it to your utility bill to determine if it provides water to the inside of your building or to the irrigation system.

To read your water meter, carefully lift the lid of the meter box. You will see a meter inside. Slowly lift the cover of the meter to avoid damaging any wires. Also, look carefully for spiders and other critters – the meter box is an ideal place for some to build a nest. The meter should have a 7 digit number on the face of the meter. This number measures the amount of water that has gone through the meter since it was installed. To calculate your water usage, note the 7 digit reading and the date. Read the meter 7 days later and subtract that initial reading number from the second reading. This will tell you how much water you used during the week. You can multiply this number by four to approximate your monthly water use.

Q. How can I get additional information?

A. Additional information is available on our website: www.srcity.org/watershortage or by calling the Water Conservation Program at (707) 543-3985. For more information on your water bill or to update information on the type of business you have, please call Utility Billing at (707) 543-3150.