

Fact Sheet on California Water Use Efficiency Regulations AB 1668 and SB 606

Overview

- Sets water efficiency targets for individual water agencies, as a whole. In turn, each water agency must determine how it will comply with state law. Any changes to RPU's water efficiency standards or programs will be subject to a public review. At this time, no changes are anticipated, but RPU will continue to monitor the state's rule making process.
- Signed into law by Gov. Jerry Brown on May 31, 2018
- Requires CA urban water providers to comply with new permanent water use targets for their service areas by 2023
- No immediate impacts to customers from these laws
- Will not apply to individual customers or businesses

Status

- State agencies (Department of Water Resources and State Water Resources Control Board) are currently working out the details for implementing the new water use requirements.
 - Requirements not yet set - Deadline is 2022
 - Water providers must comply by 2023

Water Use Target

- The Water Use Target is an aggregate total of the following three standards listed below. Each will be calculated and added together to represent an overall water use target for the water provider (and not individual customers) to meet.
 - A standard for indoor residential water use of 55 gallons per person per day— dropping incrementally to 50 gallons beginning in 2030.
 - Not applicable to individual customers, rather this is water provider target based on total residential population.
 - A standard for outdoor water use (to be determined) based upon and the amount of irrigable landscaped area for a residential or dedicated irrigation commercial account and local climate.
 - A standard for water loss due to leaks in water system pipes (to be determined).
- Water providers will have to determine how their service area can best achieve the new water use target. Urban water providers will set and monitor targets for their service area as a whole (not on individual basis) and will determine how to help entire service area reach the new targets.

FAQs

On May 31, 2018, Governor Brown signed two bills which build on the ongoing efforts to “make conservation a California way of life”. Assembly Bill 1668 and Senate Bill 606 provide an interrelated framework intended to strengthen the state’s water resiliency in the face of future droughts by establishing standards and guidelines for efficient water use.

What do the new laws state?

Many details for implementing the new laws will be determined over the next couple of years, and there are no immediate impacts to customers. The laws provide a framework for water providers to set new, permanent water use targets by 2022 that combine:

- An indoor standard of 55 gallons per person per day
- An outdoor standard for residential and commercial customers based upon our local climate and amount of landscaped area
- A standard for water loss from leaks in the water system

These standards will be calculated and added together to create one overall target for each water provider’s service area. Individual customers will not be required by the state to meet specific targets.

How will the new laws impact customers?

There are no immediate impacts to customers. Over the next several years, specific water use targets will be set for a water provider’s overall service area (not on an individual basis) based upon the standards outlined in the laws. Once water provider-level targets are established in 2022 and implementation begins in 2023, water providers may choose to work with individual households and businesses to increase their water efficiency through available rebates, services and programs.

Will it be illegal to take a shower and wash clothes in the same day, as some media have reported?

No. There is nothing in the laws that specifies when or how often a person may shower or do laundry. The new laws outline an overall framework for setting and meeting water use targets at the water provider level. While the laws’ framework does include a goal for individual indoor water use of 55 gallons per person per day beginning in 2022, this applies on an overall system-wide basis (and not an individual basis).

How hard will it be to meet the indoor target of 55 gallons per person per day?

It should not be hard. It’s important to note that the indoor target of 55 gallons per person per day is not a goal for individual water use but will be measured across a water provider’s entire service area and does not include outdoor water use. That said, water industry experts are projecting that many people are already meeting this indoor target or do not have far to go. The Alliance for Water Efficiency has an online water calculator that can estimate how much water a household uses indoors. You can find it at www.home-water-works.org/calculator. Additionally, many water providers including RPU offer rebates for indoor fixtures like toilets and clothes washers to incentive customers to upgrade to more efficient WaterSense and ENERGY STAR labeled models.

Will water providers be monitoring and evaluating individual water use as part of the new laws?

No. There is no requirement in the new laws that individual households must meet a specific target. The new laws provide a framework for setting targets, but those will be applied on a system-wide basis, and progress toward achieving targets will be reviewed on a system-wide basis.

How will the new laws impact businesses in California?

While the new laws do not set specific water use targets for business, they do outline a framework for creating new water efficiency performance measures for businesses—these are recommended actions for specific business sectors to improve water efficiency over time. Performance measures will be determined over the next several years, and the process will include opportunities for public input.

Will individual residents and businesses be fined for not meeting water use targets?

The regulations and associated water use targets are required for the water provider as a whole (including all customers) NOT at the individual resident or business level. Therefore, individuals and businesses will not be fined by the state for not meeting the water provider water use target. However, individuals and businesses may be fined for violating current local water provider water waste ordinances and guidelines. Note that such ordinances and guidelines exist currently and are not new.

What is RPU doing to prepare for the implementation of these laws?

RPU is closely monitoring the rule making process to see what the targets will be set to. RPU will decide how to best meet the targets—through water-wise rebates, infrastructure improvements, outdoor watering guidelines and/or other efforts. RPU will continue to offer rebates and services to help customers use water wisely, including incentives to upgrade to more efficient toilets, clothes washers, and irrigation equipment. You can learn more at [Riversideca.gov/utilities/residents/rebates-water.asp](https://riversideca.gov/utilities/residents/rebates-water.asp).

What are the next steps for implementing the new laws?

The laws will now be translated into regulations, which will outline details and rules for implementing the intent of the laws at the local level. Stakeholders (water providers, non-profit organizations and other interested parties) will work together over the next years with state agencies (including the State Water Resources Control Board and the California Department of Water Resources) to finalize the regulations by the required deadline of 2022.

Why was the new law created?

The new rules were prompted by California's frequent cycles of drought and are meant to better prepare California for the next drought and the future effects of climate change on the state's water supplies. The overall goal is to make water conservation a way of life in California and a permanent part of the state's culture.

When will the new water conservation targets take effect?

Water providers must set new water conservation targets by 2022 and will be expected to begin implementing them by 2023 and every year after that. Again, these targets are service-area wide and not for individual households.

Will residents have to go back to saving water as they did during the drought?

No. The new laws create long term water use targets not short-term conservation targets like those implemented during the drought. The long-term targets are meant to inspire greater efficiency over time rather than mandate short-term cutbacks that require extreme measures such as not watering your lawn or flushing the toilet less.