



City of Arts & Innovation

City Council Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL DATE: AUGUST 25, 2026

FROM: PUBLIC UTILITIES WARDS: ALL

SUBJECT: AMENDMENT TO SECTIONS 14.22.010-14.22.080 OF THE RIVERSIDE MUNICIPAL CODE UPDATING THE WATER CONSERVATION ORDINANCE TO COMPLY WITH ASSEMBLY BILL 1572

ISSUE:

Introduce for first reading an ordinance amending sections Section 14.22.010 through 14.22.080 of the Riverside Municipal Code (RMC) to update the City's Water Conservation Ordinance to comply with Assembly Bill 1572.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the City Council:

1. Introduce an ordinance of the City of Riverside amending Section 14.22.010 through 14.22.080 of the Riverside Municipal Code to update the City's Water Conservation Ordinance to incorporate the requirements of Assembly Bill 1572 and ensure compliance with California Water Code § 10608.14; and
2. Adopt the ordinance at a subsequent City Council meeting following the first reading.

BOARD RECOMMENDATION:

On July 27, 2026, the Board of Public Utilities voted unanimously to recommend that the City Council introduce and adopt an ordinance of the City of Riverside amending the Water Conservation Ordinance to incorporate and comply with requirements of Assembly Bill 1572.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY:

California continues to advance statewide water conservation efforts in response to recurring drought, climate change impacts, and long-term water supply reliability concerns. Assembly Bill 1572 (AB 1572), signed into law on October 13, 2023, amended the California Water Code to establish a phased statewide prohibition on the use of potable water to irrigate nonfunctional turf (NFT) on commercial, industrial, and institutional (CII) properties, as well as common areas of homeowners' associations (HOAs), common interest developments (CIDs), and community service organizations.

BACKGROUND:

AB 1572 addresses the wasteful use of potable water for irrigating nonfunctional turf (NFT) on commercial, industrial, and institutional (CII) properties, in addition to common areas of homeowners' associations (HOAs) and community service organizations. Nonfunctional turf refers to decorative grass that does not serve recreational or community purposes such as turf in medians, business parks, or ornamental landscapes. The continued irrigation of nonfunctional turf with potable water is no longer considered a reasonable or sustainable use of water under state policy.

Under AB 1572, the statewide prohibition on potable water use for NFT irrigation is required to be implemented on the following schedule:

- **January 1, 2027:** Applies to all properties owned by local governments, public agencies, and public water systems.
- **January 1, 2028:** Extends to all CII properties.
- **January 1, 2029:** Applies to common areas of HOAs, common interest developments (CIDs), and community service organizations.
- **January 1, 2031:** Extends to public properties in disadvantaged communities, contingent on available state funding.

In addition to the potable water irrigation prohibition, AB 1572 requires public water systems, including Riverside Public Utilities to update their local ordinances, regulations, or policies by **January 1, 2027**, and to communicate these changes to customers. Larger property owners with more than 5,000 square feet of irrigated area must self-certify compliance with the State Water Resources Control Board beginning in 2030 or 2031, depending on property type. This process has not yet been developed by the State Water Board.

DISCUSSION:

The proposed ordinance amendments are necessary to ensure compliance with state law, prevent potential enforcement penalties, and align with broader state and regional conservation goals. To achieve this, staff propose incorporating AB 1572's statutory requirements into Riverside's existing Water Conservation Ordinance (RMC Chapter 14.22). Further the Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance (RMC Chapter 19.570) will be updated to reflect the addition of nonfunctional turf provisions to the Municipal Code later this year as part of the CEDD's biannual Zoning Code update. Other revisions include removing the word "minimal" from Section 14.22.060(B)(3) regarding irrigation of trees and shrubs during Stage Four water shortage conditions, consistent with a recommendation from a member of the Riverside Public Utilities Board, as well as non-substantive technical, grammatical, and formatting corrections that will not alter the intent or of the Water Conservation Ordinance.

The proposed ordinance amendments accomplish the following:

- **Implements AB 1572 requirements** by prohibiting the use of potable water for irrigating nonfunctional turf on applicable property types according to the state's phased schedule.

- **Updates definitions and terminology** within RMC Chapter 14.22 to align with AB 1572 and Water Code § 10608.14.
- **Clarifies enforcement authority and compliance expectations** for customers subject to the NFT irrigation prohibition.
- **Incorporates minor technical and grammatical corrections** to improve clarity and consistency within the ordinance.
- **Maintains the existing five stage Water Conservation framework**, which remains unchanged except for updates necessary to integrate AB 1572 requirements.

These revisions ensure that Riverside remains in full compliance with state law, avoids potential enforcement penalties, and positions Riverside to leverage future state funding opportunities for turf replacement and water efficient landscaping.

RPU staff have already begun outreach to customers explaining the requirements under AB 1572 and providing them with rebate options while funding is available. Outreach activities have included presentations to various groups, workshops, one-to-one meetings with property owners and organizations, mailings, email communications, and direct engagement with RPU's key accounts and commercial customers impacted by the requirements. Outreach and customer support will continue.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact related to this report.

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Certified as to availability of funds:	Julie Nemes, Finance Director
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Approved as to form:	James Johnson, City Attorney

Attachments:

1. Redline Water Conservation Ordinance
2. Presentation