

IWVWD General Manager's Column  
December 18, 2019

## **“It's Always Something”** **By Don Zdeba**

“It's always something” are words Gilda Radner made famous with her character of Roseanne Roseannadanna on Saturday Night Live in the late 70's. The same can be said for the regulatory world when it comes to water in California. While the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act, or “SGMA”, has been the hot topic in the Indian Wells Valley as the January 31, 2020 deadline approaches to submit a Groundwater Sustainability Plan to the Department of Water Resources for review and approval, another set of bills will very likely have further significant impact on our water use.

In 2016, Governor Brown issued Executive Order B-37-16, entitled, “Making Water Conservation a California Way of Life,” directing the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) and the Department of Water Resources (DWR) to establish a long-term framework for water conservation and drought planning. As a result, SB 606 (Senator Hertzberg of Van Nuys) and AB 1668 (Assemblymember Friedman of Glendale) introduced legislation to support the Governor's directive.

The legislation, signed into law in May 2018, requires urban water suppliers to adopt an Urban Water Management Plan (UWMP) before July 1, 2021 and revise and update the plan every 5 years. The plan must contain a drought risk assessment that examines water shortages for a drought lasting the next five consecutive years and a water shortage contingency plan to consist of certain elements. The plan must include annual water supply and demand assessment procedures, standard water shortage levels, shortage response actions, and communication protocols and procedures. Urban water suppliers must also calculate a water use objective along with actual water use by 2023 and update those numbers each year by November 1<sup>st</sup>. The water use will consist of two components: residential indoor and outdoor use. For indoor use, it sets a standard of 55 gallons per capita per day (gpcd) until January 1, 2025 with subsequent reductions over time. The number will decrease to the greater of a number selected by DWR or 52.5 gpcd on January 1, 2025. There will be a further reduction to 50 gpcd on January 1, 2030.

For development of the outdoor residential component, the legislation requires DWR to conduct landscaping and climate studies of about 400 urban water suppliers by 2021. DWR will then provide this data to the SWRCB and local water suppliers for development of urban water use objectives. While attending the Fall Association of California Water Agencies (ACWA) Conference earlier this month, I attended a session on this legislation and had the opportunity to have questions about potential local impacts answered. One issue of significant concern is our local dependence on evaporative cooling. Studies have indicated evaporative coolers, depending on size and how they are equipped and used, can consume from 60 to 160 gallons per day. Since DWR considers cooler usage as indoor use, it is evident that the 55 gpcd for indoor use could be accounted for by evaporative cooling alone. To reassure you, DWR is aware of this issue

and has listed it as one of eight variances to be considered in setting targets. DWR's approach is to conduct a "saturation study" to determine the percentage of residences reliant on evaporative cooling. The study, which is proposed to be conducted by the University of California-Davis, would evaluate both electrical and water bills to arrive at the "saturation" level. The premise is high electric bills imply use of air conditioning and high water bills imply use of evaporative cooling. We know implicitly evaporative cooling is the predominant cooling method locally so it will be interesting to see what such a study concludes.

The legislation imposes civil liability for a supplier's violation of a regulation up to \$1,000 per day that the violation occurs. If an urban water supplier does not prepare, adopt, and submit its UWMP to DWR, the supplier is ineligible to receive any water grant or loan unless it complies with the requirements for adopting a plan.

It has not been my intent to be the Grinch with this article, but it is important to understand the changes occurring in California water laws and the local effect they may have. We have much to be thankful for as the year draws to a close considering all we have been through in 2019. So on behalf of the Board and staff of the Indian Wells Valley Water District, I wish you and yours all the joys this holiday season can bring and the very best in 2020. Please stay engaged in water issues by visiting our Facebook page (IWW Water District) and website, [www.iwvwd.com](http://www.iwvwd.com).