

2015 Update to the California Model Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance

Michelle Koo, RLA – City of Hayward

Kelly Schoonmaker, RLA, LEED AP – StopWaste



Background

- Intent: Reduce outdoor water use by establishing statewide water conservation requirements on new landscape construction and renovations.
- AB 1881 established Water Conservation in Landscaping Act in 2006.
- This update to the 2010 ordinance came into effect 12/1/15*

Highlights of the 2015 update to WELO

- **Applicability – Permitted projects**
 - 500 sf for new construction
 - 2,500 sf for renovations
- **Prescriptive Path to Compliance (<2,500 sf)**
- **Teeth:**
 - Reporting requirements for implementing jurisdictions
 - CALGreen requirements (Section 4.304)
- **Lower Water Budgets**
- **Compost and Mulch Requirements**

Adoption

- **Cities had several options for adoption:**
 - Adopt by reference
 - Adopt in detail
 - Amend or adopt a new ordinance to meet requirements
 - Do nothing and it would come into effect
 - Single agency or regional ok
- **Cities were required to report to DWR by December 31, 2015 on adoption (or March 1, 2016 for regional)**

Reporting

- **Next report due Jan 31, 2017 and will include:**
 - Number and types of projects subject to the ordinance
 - Total area (in square feet or acres) subject to the ordinance
 - Number of new housing starts, new commercial projects, and landscape renovations
 - *The procedure for review of projects subject to the ordinance
 - *The actions taken to verify compliance- Is a plan check performed; if so, by what entity? Is a site inspection performed; if so, by what entity? Is a post-installation audit required; if so, by whom?
 - *Enforcement measures
 - *The challenges to implementing and enforcing the ordinance
 - *The educational, training, and other needs to properly apply the ordinance
- **Will necessitate new tracking protocols**

Implementation

- **Requires interdepartmental coordination and communication**
 - Conditions of development - Planning
 - Plan Check – permitting, planning, city landscape architect
 - Field inspection—building inspectors, city landscape architects
- **Challenges:**
 - in-house expertise reviewing plans
 - staff time
 - other?

Strategies to improve compliance

- **Make it straightforward for submitters**
 - Introduce requirements early—entitlements, conditions of approval
 - Provide a Landscape Checklist (CALBO templates available)
 - Create a dedicated, easy to find web page with process, checklists, and resources
 - Tools:
 - WUCOLS
 - Water Calculator
 - Reference ET for your city
 - Sources of compost and mulch
 - Link to irrigation auditors



Strategies to facilitate enforcement

- **Is this expertise available?**
- **If not, start simple with a checklist for reviewers:**
 - Is all documentation present?
 - Smart controller?
 - MAWA > ETWU?
 - Do the math—is it correct?
 - Correct ETo?
 - Is there a lawn? Pool? Water feature?
 - Look for compost and mulch in notes
 - Require proof of irrigation audit before sign-off and occupancy
 - Field inspection



Tools and Resources

- Department of Water Resources: www.water.ca.gov
- StopWaste: www.stopwaste.org
- CalBO: www.calbo.org
- Irrigation Association: www.irrigation.org
- Compost and Mulch Marketplace: www.lawntogarden.org



STOPWASTE

9



Thank you!

Michelle Koo

Michelle.Koo@hayward-ca.gov

Kelly Schoonmaker

kschoonmaker@stopwaste.org