

CITY OF SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA  
**COUNCIL POLICY**

SUBJECT: COMPREHENSIVE POLICY FOR A SUSTAINABLE WATER SUPPLY IN SAN DIEGO

POLICY NO.: 400-

EFFECTIVE DATE:

**BACKGROUND:**

San Diego's economy and quality of life depend on a reliable and financially viable supply of water. The City of San Diego needs to establish guiding principles through which we will ensure that our water supply remains secure.

Our City and region are facing and will continue to face uncertainties and challenges to our water supply reliability because of issues related to trending drought, pumping restrictions in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, shortages in the Colorado River watershed, and the effects of Climate Change.

To prepare for the challenges facing our City and region, the San Diego City Council must have comprehensive policies that embrace new technologies and innovation, encourage collaboration on all levels, and contain performance measures and regular review to ensure that they are up-to-date. The comprehensive policies should be developed into an implementation plan with goals, priorities and timelines to move forward with implementation of this and other water policies.

**PURPOSE:**

To establish policies to assure an adequate water supply for the City of San Diego, including the following principles:

- Elements of the policies should be cohesive, and financially and environmentally sound.
- Local and imported water supplies, storage, conservation, wastewater, and storm and rain water systems should be used together to ensure future water supplies.
- Reliable and inexpensive imported water sources are finite.
- The interrelationship between energy and water should be recognized and incorporated into water related decisions where appropriate.
- A diverse portfolio of cost-effective local sources of water should be developed to ensure a sustainable water supply.

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- The City should incorporate current water treatment, system maintenance, storage, distribution and usage technologies and allow the consideration of new technologies or opportunities.
- The City should collaborate with local and regional stakeholders, agencies and partners for securing water reliability; and collaborate with private and public agencies for infrastructure financing.
- The balance between water demand and water supply should be taken into account in all future land-use and planning decisions.

**POLICY:**

For ease of organization, the following policies are categorized as either general, or related to water quality, conservation, local and regional supplies, importation, and related local and state laws and policies.

**A. General**

It is the policy of the City Council that:

1. The Mayor, Public Utilities Department or the Mayor's designee, shall advise the City Council or Council committees regularly on the City's current and future water supplies.
2. The Mayor and Intergovernmental Relations Director shall monitor legislative and regulatory actions, court decisions, and other events that could affect the City's water supply and report to the City Council on a bi-annual basis.
3. The San Diego County Water Authority (CWA) is recognized as the lead agency for procuring imported water to meet the present and long term needs of the City and the San Diego region. As a member of CWA, the City of San Diego shall assist CWA as needed in working with the Metropolitan Water District (MWD), the State Department of Water Resources (DWR), the County of San Diego, other local water agencies, and the private sector in efforts to satisfy the future water requirements of the region.
4. The Mayor and the Public Utilities Director shall work closely with the City Council appointed representatives to the CWA Board of Directors in pursuit of an adequate water supply in the future and management of costs for ratepayers.
5. City of San Diego appointees to the CWA Board of Directors shall report to the City Council on a bi-annual basis for the purpose of discussing water issues. At this bi-annual meeting, discussion will focus on proposals which the CWA representatives would recommend the City support to develop a

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sustainable water supply.

6. The Independent Rates Oversight Committee (IROC) shall report to the City Council on a bi-annual basis for the purpose of discussing water issues related to its activities as outlined in San Diego Municipal Code Chapter 2, Article 6, Division 20.

It is the policy of the City Council to:

7. Support economically sound activities that create an affordable and reliable water supply to attract, retain and expand business, and promote an excellent quality of life for our residents.
8. Support decisions that are aligned with the City's Urban Water Management Plan and the Conservation Element of the City's General Plan.
9. Support the use of Water Supply Assessments related to land-use decisions.
10. Support and consider partnerships with businesses and organizations that incubate practical new technologies and scientific research to assist the City in developing a sustainable water supply.
11. Support and consider partnerships with businesses and organizations that can provide assistance to the City in water, wastewater and storm water facilities planning in order to mitigate and prepare for Climate Change and other infrastructure challenges and uncertainties.
12. Support public and public-private partnerships to finance infrastructure projects and new local and regional water sources.
13. Support infrastructure assessments and replacement schedules based on the conditions of the City's water transportation, treatment and storage systems.
14. Review and update this policy as appropriate, but at least every 5-years.

**B. Quality**

It is the policy of the City Council to:

1. Provide its potable water customers with potable water that meets or exceeds all regulations and health standards established by Federal, State and County regulatory agencies.
2. Provide its recycled water customers with recycled water that meets or exceeds all health and

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industrial standards established by State and County regulatory agencies. In addition, support source control of wastewater salinity and cost-effective infrastructure improvements that decrease salinity and other contaminants that may adversely affect facilities that use recycled water.

3. Monitor the review and potential promulgation of regulations pertaining to Contaminants of Concern by the United States Environmental Protection Agency.

C. Conservation

It is the policy of the City Council to:

1. Support a, tiered rate or allocation pricing structure for water customers that encourages conservation and discourages waste; while supporting the needs of private sector businesses and agriculture.
2. Consider using customer specific data, such as Geographic Information Systems (GIS) data, geographic zones and evapotranspiration information for single-family residential customer rates.
3. Support the development of grant programs for economic incentive programs to encourage water conservation; partnering with the CWA, MWD, and State and Federal Governments when possible. To ensure the public is aware, economic incentive programs should be included in outreach and education programs.
4. Support local and regional education and outreach programs emphasizing conservation and water efficient landscaping. Public outreach on water awareness should stress the mutual benefit of reduction efforts and using water efficient technologies as well as demonstration projects.
5. Support the development of innovative, market-based programs that encourage conservation.
6. Support the pre-treatment of industrial wastewater to conserve potable water normally used for dilution.

D. Local and Regional Supply

1. Support development of local water supplies to meet present and future needs.
2. Support a rate structure for non-potable recycled water that encourages the use and facilitates cost-effective expansion of non-potable recycled water infrastructure.
3. Support simplification of regulatory approval for the use of non-potable recycled water for residential

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landscape irrigation.

4. Support indirect potable reuse (IPR) if the Water Purification Demonstration Project is successful.
5. Support other potable reuse projects that are cost-effective and meet regulatory requirements for San Diego's drinking water supply.
6. Support the secondary use of graywater for landscaping.
7. Support rainwater collection and reuse for irrigation.
8. Support the development of grant programs for economic incentive programs for graywater and rainwater collection systems, partnering with the CWA, MWD, and State and Federal Governments where possible.
9. Support and consider partnerships with regional partners and with Mexico to investigate the development of local supply projects, such as desalination.
10. Support local and regional brackish groundwater desalination projects.
11. Support new technological improvements in the field of desalination.
12. Support activities that help divert storm water to local reservoirs and underground aquifers, including Low Impact Development (LID) projects and policies.
13. Support the construction of regional storage reservoirs or enlargement of existing reservoirs as needed.
14. Support programs to recharge, protect and improve the yield from local and regional groundwater basins.

E. Importation

1. Support economically sound activities that reduce the City's reliance on imported sources of water and increase local supplies.
2. Support efforts by CWA and others to seek new, cost-effective water supply sources.

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3. Support pricing and repayment policies for all future water contracts and all future projects that shall ensure that beneficiaries pay their full share of costs associated with development and operation of those facilities.

F. Related Local, State and Federal Laws and Policies

1. Maintain an emergency reserve storage of water as specified in City Council Policy 400-04 for the purpose of minimizing the impact of temporary interruptions in the delivery of imported water. Such storage to be in an amount sufficient to cover reasonably anticipated needs until repairs can be completed to supply lines in the event of emergencies or natural disasters.
2. Support implementation of Council Policy 900-14, Sustainable Building Policy for municipal development, and any other future sustainable building policies that may be developed to help the City conserve water.
3. Support the implementation and update all of the City's water planning documents, including the Long-Range Water Resources Management Plan, Recycled Water Master Plan (San Diego Municipal Code Chapter 6, Article 4, Division 8) and Urban Water Management Plan (State Water Code, Division 6, Sections 10610 through 10656).
4. Support and implement the City of San Diego's Drought Emergency Restrictions in Municipal Code Chapter 6, Article 7, Division 38 as necessary.
5. Support voluntary transfers of water between local and regional suppliers as authorized by State Water Code Division 1, Chapter 7.
6. Support the continued cost-effective expansion of non-potable recycled water for purposes allowed under Title 22, Article 3 of the California Code of Regulations.