



Press Release

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CITY OF CHINO HILLS MOVES TO LESS STRINGENT STAGE II MODERATE WATER CONSERVATION ALERT

Chino Hills, CA – In response to the City's increased water production capabilities, the fact that much of the State of California, including San Bernardino County, is now considered to be in a drought-free status, and the easing of state and local water conservation regulations, the City Hills City Council has taken action to move back from a State III - High Water Conservation Alert to a Stage II - Moderate Water Conservation Alert, effective as of the date of Council action on May 9, 2023.

Residents may wonder why the City is rolling back to a Stage II, Moderate Conservation Alert and not lifting all water-use restrictions due to the greatly improved drought conditions. It is because, pursuant to Chino Hills Municipal Code Section 13.08.050, the City Council may declare the conservation stage based on any of the following circumstances:

- Issuance of a water emergency executive order by the Governor of California; or
- Adoption of certain regulations by the California State Water Resources Control Board; or
- Major interruptions in water supply from Metropolitan Water District, the Inland Empire Utilities Agency, or any other major water supplier to the City; or
- Occurrence of a major water emergency emanating from a natural or man-caused disaster; and
- Whenever the City's water supply is anticipated to be reduced by up to ten percent, and voluntary conservation does not achieve the desired reduction.

The State Department of Water Resources (DWR) is not able to meet 25% of requested imported water supplies. Further, Metropolitan Water District (MWD) notes that storage reserves have been drawn down and significant challenges remain to the region's other source of imported water – the Colorado River. MWD continues to call on residents and businesses across the region to use water as efficiently as possible to refill storage and prepare for potential steep cuts to supplies from the Colorado River. Further, while many of

- MORE -

the most stringent provisions within the Governor's water executive orders have been repealed, these orders are still in effect.

Residents may also be wondering if their water rates will go down because the drought is over for now. The answer is no. The cost of providing the service and maintaining the infrastructure to deliver your water is the basis for your rates. As a public water provider, the City of Chino Hills can only charge its customers for the costs associated with providing water service. The cost to operate a water system includes the fixed costs for items that must be in place whether water use is up or down, and whether we are in a drought or not. In other words, customers are charged for the maintenance of the system in place that provides them with the ability to have water delivered to their property on demand, whether or not they actually use any water in any given month. Fixed costs include items such as maintenance of pipes in the ground, repairs and replacement, personnel costs, insurance, and maintenance of water storage reservoirs and water treatment facilities to ensure that the water is of high quality and meets State and Federal standards. Also, at the recent Utility Rate Study Workshop held on April 25, 2023, staff did not recommend any water rate increases.

The Stage II Moderate Water Conservation Alert allows for Outdoor watering three days per week on designated days based on street address:

- Residential addresses ending in an even number may irrigate on Mondays, Wednesdays, & Saturdays
- Residential addresses ending in an odd number may irrigate on Tuesdays, Thursdays, & Sundays
- Non-residential addresses may only irrigate on Mondays, Wednesdays, & Fridays
- Outdoor watering is not allowed between the hours of 9:00 am and 6:00 pm regardless of the watering day

Although the newly declared Stage II Moderate Water Conservation Ordinance allows for an additional day for outdoor irrigation, it still prohibits wasteful practices. With California experiencing significant changes in weather from year to year, staying water efficient year-round helps to conserve this critical resource, prepare for future challenges and/or imported water shortages, and maintain the Chino Hills lifestyle for future generations.

Additional Stage II Restrictions:

- Prohibits the application of water to hard surfaces such as sidewalks, driveways, and parking areas or irrigation causing runoff, etc.
- Requires the repair of leaks within 48 hours of notification by the City
- Prohibits use of a hose without a shut-off valve
- Prohibits irrigating outdoor landscape during or 48 hours after measurable rain (1/10" or more within a 48-hour period)

- MORE -

- Limits pool filling to the assigned watering days
- Decorative water fountains at commercial properties may only be operated if the water is part of a circulating system
- Vehicles, trailers, boats, and livestock can be washed with a hand-held hose equipped with a shut-off nozzle
- Restaurants may not serve water unless the customer requests water
- Water may not run off or leak from landscaped areas to streets, sidewalks, or other paved areas due to incorrectly directed or maintained sprinklers, or over watering
- Fire hydrants may only be used for firefighting*

*An exception may be made for construction use through a City-designated meter when recycled water is not available.

In June 2022, the City of Chino Hills escalated its water conservation efforts by advancing from a Stage II Moderate Water Conservation Alert to a Stage III High Water Conservation Alert. Staff recommended a Stage III Alert in response to the severe statewide drought conditions and in anticipation of a reduced water supply. At the time, Governor Newsom had signed into effect Executive Order N-7-22, implementing numerous emergency drought restrictions. Additionally, the DWR responded by issuing a 5% water allocation of imported water only for Health, Safety, and Critical Needs for the entire State, significantly impacting the City's ability to purchase water.

In an effort to offset the impact of reduced imported state water and supply, City staff worked towards increasing the City's water production capabilities. Since the implementation of the Stage III Alert in June 2022, the City has made significant progress on its goal to increase its viable water supply. As a result, many of the conditions and restrictions that prompted the City's advancement to the Stage III Alert have now come to an end.

According to the April 11, 2023, California Drought Monitor map, much of the state, including most of San Bernardino County, is now drought-free. The numerous winter storms in February and March have resulted in robust flows and an increased water supply, prompting the DWR to announce a significant boost in the State Water Project allocations this year, forecasted to be approximately 75% of requested water supplies, up from 35 percent announced in February.

Subsequently, MWD, one of the City's providers of imported water deliveries, terminated its declaration of a Water Shortage Emergency Condition as of March 2023, and on March 24, 2023, Governor Newsom issued Executive Order N-5-23 terminating many of the most stringent drought emergency provisions initially implemented by his State of Emergency Proclamations and previous Executive Orders while leaving the remaining provisions of the proclamations and order in place.

Lastly, on April 5, 2023, the Inland Empire Utilities Agency Board of Directors declared an end to the Water Shortage Emergency Condition and Emergency Water Conservation Framework, agreeing to return to normal water supply conditions for the Agency's service area and discontinue any levels of action under its Water Shortage Contingency Plan.

Public Works staff will continue to monitor water/drought conditions and encourage water conservation. In addition, the City is proud to partner with our local water agencies to offer a variety of rebates and water-saving programs for residents. For more information on the Stage II Water Alert, water conservation tips, or on the various available rebates and water-saving programs, please visit www.chinohills.org/WaterConservation or call the City's Water Use Efficiency Coordinator at (909) 364-2804.

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