

On May 31, 2018, two long-term water-use efficiency conservation bills (SB 606 and AB 1668) were signed into law by Gov. Jerry Brown that call for the creation of indoor and outdoor water-use targets for water agencies. The following information provides an overview of how these bills will affect water agencies and residents across the state.

Q. What are urban water use objectives?

A. Starting in 2023, urban water suppliers (which have 3,000 or more service connections or annually serve more than 3,000 acre feet of water) will be required to submit a calculated urban water-use objective to the state. Urban water suppliers will be required to meet their urban water use objective by 2024. The urban water use objective will be based on residential water use efficiency standards for indoor and outdoor water use, and system-wide water loss standards.

Q. Will the state issue these urban water-use objectives for individual water users?

A. No. The water-use objectives are for local water suppliers' system-wide, aggregate water use. There is no requirement in these bills that individual households must adhere to a specific water-use standard.

Q. Will individual water users be fined for exceeding water-use objectives?

A. No. The bills establish possible fines, starting in 2027, on local water agencies that do not meet their water-use objectives. These fines would be levied on the agencies, not individuals.

Q. How will local water agencies meet these new urban water use objectives?

A. Each year, local water agencies will be responsible for ensuring whether their system-wide, aggregate water use meets the objective, and how to best help their customers use water more efficiently to help the water agency meet the objective.

Q. How will the state's water efficiency standards be calculated?

A. In an effort to ensure the water efficiency goals are fair, they will be calculated using water efficiency standards for indoor and outdoor water use that are developed through research and public input. The indoor calculation will initially be based on a provisional standard of 55 gallons of water a day per person in each household. The outdoor calculation is still being determined, but will account for local climate and the number of irrigable acres, including residential and commercial outdoor landscaping

in the district's service area. Variances for special circumstances will also be allowed.

In 2025, the indoor standard is provisionally scheduled to change to 52.5 gallons of water a day per person. In 2030, it is provisionally scheduled to change to 50 gallons of water a day per person.

Q. Is it easy to limit indoor water use to 55 gallons per person per day?

A. Based on industry estimates, many households already meet this standard. The Alliance for Water Efficiency has an online water calculator (www.home-water-works.org/calculator) that will help customers estimate how much water is used in their household. Households with water-efficient appliances are likely using 55 gallons or less per person per day.

Remember, the state water efficiency standards will use this calculation to develop an aggregate goal for water agencies. For example, a local water agency with 1,000 connections that estimates it's serving a population of 2,500 people would have a water efficiency standard based on 2,500 X 55 gallons per day, plus the outdoor and system water loss calculations are still being determined.

Q. Will commercial water users be required to use water more efficiently?

A. Yes. By 2022, the state will adopt water use efficiency performance measures for various commercial, industrial and institutional (schools, parks, etc.) water users.

Q. Will agricultural water users be required to use water more efficiently?

A. Yes. Every five years, agricultural water suppliers will be required to update agricultural water management plans to include an annual water budget, drought contingency actions, and actions to reduce water loss and improve system efficiency.

Q. Where can I find more information?

A. For more information visit ACWA's website at www.acwa.com/resources or the State Water Resources Control Board's website at www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/conservation_portal/california_statutes.html.

