

# Memorandum

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To: DISTRICT LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS

Date: July 18, 2008

From: KEITH ROBINSON, Principal (original signed)  
Landscape Architecture Program

Subject: Water Conservation

This memo highlights recent events regarding State water supplies and reiterates the California Department of Transportation Department's (Department) water conservation policies and Landscape Architecture responsibilities in implementing water conservation strategies.

As a result of two consecutive years of below normal rainfall in the state, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger State of California proclaimed a statewide drought on June 4, 2008 and issued Executive Order S-06-08 (EO), which takes immediate action to address existing and potential water shortages throughout the State. The EO directs the Department of Water Resources to facilitate water transfers across the State, work with local water districts and agencies to improve local coordination, and help local water districts and agencies improve water efficiency and conservation. The full text of the EO is available at: <http://gov.ca.gov/issue/water-supply/>

In anticipation of intermittent and ongoing water shortages the Department adopted Deputy Directive 13 (DD-13) in 1993 to establish water conservation as a continuing practice. This policy serves to provide policy direction and assign functional responsibilities for implementing water conservation. Specific information for the incorporation of water conservation strategies in highway planting and irrigation design is described in the Highway Design Manual, Sections 902.3 and 902.4 respectively. In addition, the Project Development Procedures Manual provides guidance for the advertisement of highway planting projects during drought conditions. Concurrence from the local water agency that water will be available for new or replacement highway planting is required before projects are advertised and when a "serious water shortage" is in effect. A "serious water shortage" occurs when regional water storage is 50% of historical average or the local water agency has mandated water rationing. The Department will delay advertisement of highway planting contracts when there is a declared "critical water shortage". A "critical water shortage" occurs when regional water storage is 70% below historical average or the local water agency has mandated 25% or greater water rationing. Attached for your reference is a current summary of regional water storage in the State.

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The current drought condition is an opportunity for the District Landscape Architects to collaborate with District Maintenance on potential water reduction strategies for highway planting. It is critical that we provide our expertise, where appropriate, in managing water use so that the State's investment in roadside planting is protected. Of particular importance when implementing any water conservation strategies is the preservation of required mitigation planting and functional planting, such as erosion control, headlight glare screening, and graffiti reduction on retaining walls and noise barriers.

Current water supplies in the State remind us that we may be only one or two dry years away from having significant water shortages. Please ensure that your employees understand the policies and principals of water conservation, and that these are incorporated into their planting and irrigation designs.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation. If you have any questions, please contact Dennis Cadd, Senior Landscape Architect at (916) 654-5370 or myself at (916) 654-6200.

Attachment

c: Design Management Board  
Dennis Cadd

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bc: Karla Sutliff  
Terry Abbott  
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