

NCSD to consider water emergency ordinance

Violators would face stiff fines; workshop set for January

By Mike Hodgson/Associate Editor

Nipomo Community Services District directors took no action last week on a draft ordinance establishing regulations for dealing with water shortage emergencies, but they set a public workshop on the plan.

Because board President Mike Winn had to leave Wednesday's meeting prior to the discussion, the remaining directors decided not to discuss the draft ordinance, said general manger Bruce Buel.

Directors plan to discuss the proposal at the regular meeting set for 9 a.m. Wednesday, Jan. 9, in the district office at 148 S. Wilson St.

"The idea is to develop a proposed document we can share with the community at the workshop Jan. 30," Buel said.

That workshop, set for 6:30 p.m. in the Forum at Nipomo High School, 525. N. Thompson Road, will give residents a chance to learn about and provide input on the proposed regulations.

The proposed ordinance would establish "trigger points" for four stages of conservation - Stage 1 weather watch, Stage 2 water warning, Stage 3 water emergency and Stage 4 extreme water emergency.

While the trigger points have not been set, the conservation measures that would be required of district water users and the penalties for violating them have been proposed.

n Stage 1 - Lawn, tree and ornamental plant irrigation would not be allowed between 9 a.m. and 8 p.m.; water could not be used for washing sidewalks, driveways and parking lots; and the use of decorative fountains would be prohibited unless they use recirculated water.

Residents also could not allow any water to run off into gutters and streets.

n Stage 2 - All prohibitions from Stage 1 would apply. Residential water use would also be limited to 295 gallons per day for multifamily residential units, 329 gallons for single-family homes on lots less than 4,500 square feet, 442 gallons for homes on lots from 4,500 to 10,000 square feet and 787 gallons for homes on lots above 10,000 square feet.

Nonresidential customers' use would be limited to 90 percent of their consumption in the same billing cycle of the established base year.

Those who exceed the residential and commercial use limits would be subject to a 200-percent surcharge on their water bills.

Water could not be used for dust control or compaction on construction projects nor to wash vehicles except at commercial car washes and service stations that recycle the water.

Restaurants also could not serve patrons water unless they specifically requested it, and swimming

pools would have to be covered when not in use.

Irrigation of lawns, trees and ornamental plants would be limited to Mondays and Wednesdays at even-numbered addresses and Tuesdays and Thursdays at odd-numbered addresses.

n Stage 3 - All prohibitions from stages 1 and 2 would apply, except water use allowances would be further reduced for multifamily and single-family homes.

Multifamily units would be restricted to 214 gallons per day, single-family homes on lots less than 4,500 square feet would be limited to 238 gallons, homes on lots from 4,500 to 10,000 square feet would be limited to 319 gallons and homes on lots more than 10,000 square feet would be limited to 569 gallons per day.

Nonresidential customers would be limited to 65 percent of their consumption during the same billing cycle of the base year.

Those exceeding their water allotments would face a 400-percent surcharge on their water bills.

No new water meters could be installed and no "will-serve" letters would be issued for new developments. Irrigation of lawns, trees and ornamental plants would be prohibited, and all irrigation meters would be locked.

n Stage 4 - All prohibitions from stages 1, 2 and 3 would be in effect, but water allotments would drop again, to 170 gallons per day for multifamily units, 183 gallons per day for single-family homes on lots less than 4,500 square feet, 246 gallons for homes on lots from 4,500 to 10,000 square feet and 437 gallons per day for homes on lots larger than 10,000 square feet.

Nonresidential customers would be limited to 50 percent of their water use in the same billing cycle of the base year.

Those who violate water use limits would face 500-percent surcharges on their water bills.

At all stages, those who violate conservation measures other than exceeding water allotments would face prosecution for infractions, with fines up to \$50 for the first violation, \$500 for the second within a year and \$250 for the third within a year; or misdemeanors, with fines up to \$600 or 30 days in jail or both.

December 18, 2007