




## MEMORANDUM

**To:** Mayor and City Council Members

**From:** Rudy Garza, Assistant City Manager 

**Date:** August 13, 2009

**Subject:** Update on City's Drought Contingency Plan

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Central Texas is currently in exceptional drought status, and the past 22 months have been the driest on record since the extreme drought of the 1950s. The combined storage in Lakes Travis and Buchanan has dropped slightly below 900,000 acre-feet with no short-term relief in sight. As of today, the LCRA requested a reduction in water use by 25%. The AWU Water Conservation program already calls for a significant reduction in customer water use.

The City's Drought Contingency Plan, authorized by Council on April 23, 2009, states that the City Manager may order Stage 2 Water Restrictions at combined lake storage levels of less than 900,000 acre-feet with a goal of reducing water use by an additional 15%. Austin is currently in Stage 1 restrictions, which have been successful in reducing water demand, however, due to the severity of the drought, we are initializing Stage 2 restrictions in compliance with the Council approved plan to further curb water use.

The following is a summary of Stage 2 Water Restrictions based upon the City's Drought Contingency Plan:

- Require residential and commercial water customers to follow a once-per-week watering schedule.
- Limit automatic irrigation systems to operation between the hours of 12:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. on designated days.
- Limit golf fairway irrigation to designated days before 10:00 a.m. or after 7:00 p.m. Golf tee and green irrigation limited to every other day.
- Limit vehicle washing to designated days and times and prohibit charity car washes.
- Allow no automatic fill valves for pools or ponds.
- Prohibit the use of outdoor fountains except to provide aeration for aquatic life and do not allow water to be added to indoor fountains.
- Allow no water to be served at restaurants unless requested by the customer.
- Prohibit the washing of sidewalks, driveways, parking areas, or other paved area except to alleviate an immediate health or safety hazard.

AWU will provide a briefing to Council at the regularly scheduled meeting on August 20, 2009 to review the City's Drought Contingency Plan and current drought conditions. Stage 2 Water

Restrictions will go into effect on Monday, August 24, 2009. Due to significant changes from Stage 1 to Stage 2, including a revision to the current watering schedule for AWU customers, the City of Austin greatly appreciates voluntary compliance with the enhanced restrictions during the transition period.

AWU will immediately begin a major media campaign including press releases, radio and television announcements to inform the community of the new watering restrictions. In addition, AWU will add temporary employees to assist with around-the-clock enforcement. These employees will focus on proactively patrolling the City to look for water waste violations. Once Stage 2 Water Restrictions go into effect, AWU will eliminate the courtesy warning to violators and will instead automatically issue a citation. This effort will encourage more compliance and stress the need for greater accountability for water use. AWU will continue to monitor the situation and will revisit the restrictions when warranted.

Please let me know if you require additional information or if you have any questions prior to next week's presentation.

cc: Marc A. Ott, City Manager  
City Department Directors