

District board calls for 20% conservation

Contact: Marty Grimes

Office: 408-630-2881

Mobile: 408-681-9265

June 14, 2016

Based on local conditions, the drought is not over

SAN JOSE—The Santa Clara Valley Water District Board of Directors lowered its water use reduction target to 20 percent at its meeting Tuesday, but emphasized that residents should continue their efforts to conserve in this ongoing drought.

In 2015, the fourth year of drought, the water district board of directors called for residents to reduce water use by 30 percent over the amount they used in 2013. In November 2015, the board extended that call to June 2016.

This past winter's rains were beneficial, helping fill some surface water reservoirs, increase our allocation of imported water and improve our local groundwater conditions. However, we still have a way to go before we reach normal conditions, particularly in relation to groundwater supplies. While water saving measures must continue for our water supplies to recover fully, the board has set a lower water use reduction target in light of the improvements this winter.

"We are still in a drought. We don't know if next year is going to be another dry year. Four years of drought is not erased by one year of decent rain," Board Chair Barbara Keegan said.

"Sometimes the public can feel a certain sense of conservation fatigue," added Keegan. "The public recognizes we're still in the drought. We're talking about a relatively modest reduction [from 30 percent to 20 percent]."

The target is based on local water conditions, including our groundwater storage, as well as expected imported water supplies, which will be larger this year than last. If county water users achieve a savings of 20 percent in 2016, it is estimated that groundwater storage will improve but still fall short of a "normal range."

Last year, Santa Clara County water users achieved 27 percent savings over the course of the year. In 2016, water savings have continued at the same rate, with cumulative savings of 27 percent through April.

"I do really appreciate, and I'm sure the rest of the board does as well, how wonderfully the community has stepped up to meet our request for conservation. We have really had an outstanding response," Keegan said.

The board also called for local water providers to continue to institute mandatory measures, as needed, to reach the 20 percent target, and called for restrictions on watering schedules to a

maximum of three times a week, up from the two day a week schedule most areas of the county have had in place since the spring of 2015.

The water district offers a variety of programs and rebates to help residents and businesses save water in the long term, including a popular landscape rebate program and a free home water audit program called Water Wise House Calls.

The board agenda item [can be found here](#).

The Santa Clara Valley Water District, with a history dating back to 1929, manages an integrated water resources system that includes the supply of clean, safe water, flood protection and stewardship of streams on behalf of Santa Clara County's 1.9 million residents. The district effectively manages 10 dams and surface water reservoirs, three water treatment plants, an advanced recycled water purification center, a state-of-the-art water quality laboratory, and nearly 400 acres of groundwater recharge ponds, providing wholesale water and groundwater management services to local municipalities and private water retailers who deliver drinking water to homes and businesses. The water district is the flood control agency for Santa Clara County, annually preparing creeks for winter rains through levee maintenance, sediment removal, bank repair and vegetation management. We have invested more than \$1 billion in flood protection efforts to protect nearly 100,000 parcels with many more projects planned.