



South Tahoe Public Utility District

General Manager
Richard H. Solbrig

Directors
Chris Cefalu
James R. Jones
Randy Vogelgesang
Kelly Gheehan
Duane Wallace

1275 Meadow Crest Drive • South Lake Tahoe • CA 96150-7401
Phone 530 544-6474 • Fax 530 541-0614 • www.stpud.us

April 8, 2016

Felicia Marcus, Chair
State Water Resources Control Board
1001 I Street
Sacramento, CA 95814-2828

Subject: Emergency Conservation Regulations

Dear Chair Marcus:

South Tahoe Public Utility District (STPUD) is a California Special District that serves retail and wholesale treated water to customers in El Dorado County in the Lake Tahoe Basin, including the City of South Lake Tahoe. STPUD's source water is 100% groundwater extracted from the Tahoe Valley South Subbasin (6.5.01).

In adopting Resolution No. 2016-0007, which extended emergency drought regulations through October 2016, the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) specifically directed staff "...to monitor and evaluate available data to precipitation, snowpack, reservoir storage levels, and other factors, and report back to the Board in March and April, 2016; and; if conditions warrant, bring a proposal for rescission or adjustment of this regulation to the Board no later than the second regularly scheduled May 2016 Board meeting." Further, the Board recognized that "...differing regional water supply conditions" might emerge as "...water supply information becomes more complete," and such information "...will inform any revisions to these emergency regulations."

To assist staff in monitoring and evaluating local and regional hydrologic and hydrogeologic conditions, STPUD offers the following data regarding water supplies in the Tahoe Valley South Subbasin. The data is current as of March 25, 2016.

Groundwater Levels

Groundwater levels in the Tahoe Valley South Subbasin have not been seriously impacted by the drought. Most wells are within their normal range of variance from wet to dry season fluctuation. Only approximately 20% of the groundwater wells in the subbasin have water levels below the normal seasonal variations. As an overall average, groundwater elevations have been declining at an average rate of approximately 1.1 feet per water year and are on average about 4.2 feet lower after four years of drought.

Groundwater Storage

Groundwater storage in the Tahoe Valley South Subbasin is calculated using two different reservoir mapping methods – the minimum curvature method, and the Kriging method. Using these two methods, the net change in storage that has occurred over four years of drought represents a temporal loss of from 2% to 5% of total storage.

Precipitation

During the 2015 water year total precipitation in terms of rain fall (60% of average) and snow pack, in snow water equivalents (15% of average), was at or near historically drier than normal levels. Snow pack is especially important in the Tahoe Valley South Subbasin as it provides the majority of recharge to the groundwater basin.

The current statistics for the 2016 water year in our area are the following:

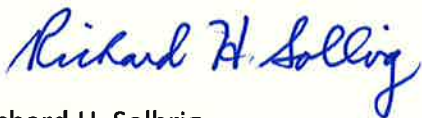
- Rainfall – 21” which is 95% of average
- Snow Pack – 76” which is 98% of average

Put succinctly, STPUD believes that hydrologic and hydrogeologic conditions in the Tahoe Basin support the rescission of the emergency regulations for local water purveyors that rely on this watershed. In addition, STPUD has completed the Groundwater Sustainability Agency notification requirements with the Department of Water Resources, convened public hearings and established a Stakeholders Advisory Group, and is moving forward under the short-term implementation plan of the SGMA. Moving to sustainable management of the groundwater basin under the new state regulations is the appropriate course of action at this time.

STPUD thanks the SWRCB for its actions to address what was a statewide emergency. I believe STPUD customers will continue their efforts to be as efficient with their water use as they can, and I know many have made permanent changes in their water use, which will help the District achieve its long-term water conservation goals.

Sincerely,

SOUTH TAHOE PUBLIC UTILITY DISTRICT



Richard H. Solbrig
General Manager/Engineer

cc: STPUD Board of Directors
John Kingsbury, Mountain County Water Resources Association
Ken Payne, El Dorado County Water Association