

CITY OF SANTA ROSA
CITY COUNCIL

TO: MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL
FROM: JENNIFER BURKE, DIRECTOR, SANTA ROSA WATER
SUBJECT: ORDINANCE INTRODUCTION – ORDINANCE ENTITLED:
ORDINANCE OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SANTA ROSA
AMENDING SANTA ROSA CITY CODE CHAPTER 14-21, WATER
WASTE REGULATIONS, TO INCLUDE DEFINITIONS,
PROHIBITIONS ON IRRIGATION OF NONFUNCTIONAL TURF,
COMPLIANCE DEADLINES AND ENFORCEMENT PROVISIONS

AGENDA ACTION: PUBLIC HEARING

RECOMMENDATION

The Board of Public Utilities and Santa Rosa Water recommend that the Council approve the first reading and introduce an ordinance amending Santa Rosa City Code Chapter 14-21 Water Waste Regulations to include clarifying definitions, a prohibition on irrigating nonfunctional turf with potable water, compliance deadlines for affected property types, enforcement provisions, and make other clarifying changes. This item has no impact on current fiscal year budget.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Santa Rosa City Code, Chapter 14-21: Water Waste Regulations, was first adopted in 1999 and last revised in 2023. Since Chapter 14-21 was last revised, California Assembly Bill 1572 (AB 1572) was signed into law in October 2023 prohibiting the irrigation of nonfunctional turf with potable water at certain property types and establishing compliance timelines, including a requirement that public water systems revise their water-service regulations, ordinances, or policies by January 1, 2027.

GOAL

This item relates to Council Goal #2 - Invest in the Development and Maintenance of the City's Infrastructure, as it satisfies a legal mandate to comply with California state regulations for continued water utility operations.

BACKGROUND/PRIOR COUNCIL REVIEW

In 1999, the Council of the City of Santa Rosa added Santa Rosa City Code Chapter 14-21 Water Waste Regulations, thereby prohibiting water waste due to unattended open

INTRODUCE AN ORDINANCE AMENDING SANTA ROSA CITY CODE CHAPTER 14-21 WATER WASTE REGULATIONS
PAGE 2 OF 4

hoses, broken irrigation heads or lines, plumbing leaks, and excessive irrigation running off property or spraying on sidewalks or gutters. The Water Waste Regulations authorize the Director of Santa Rosa Water to issue a written warning, administrative fines and disconnect a customer's water service if a water waste violation is not corrected.

Over the past two decades, California has enacted several landmark policies to reduce water consumption and ensure sustainable water management. Among these is AB 1572, signed into law by Governor Gavin Newsom on October 13, 2023, which builds upon prior conservation efforts, including the Making Conservation a California Way of Life initiative established under Senate Bill 606 and Assembly Bill 1668 in 2018.

AB 1572 prohibits the wasteful use of potable water for irrigating nonfunctional turf (NFT) on commercial, industrial, and institutional (CII) properties, as well as common areas of homeowners' associations (HOAs), common interest developments, and community service organizations with phased implementation from January 1, 2027, through 2031. Nonfunctional turf refers to decorative grass areas that do not serve a recreational or community purpose, such as turf planted in narrow strips, around entry signage, in parking lots or around building perimeters. The continued irrigation of these areas with potable water is no longer considered a sustainable practice, particularly given the state's ongoing efforts to reduce urban water demand and preserve critical water supplies in light of climate impacts on California's water resources.

In addition to the irrigation prohibition, AB 1572 requires public water systems to update their local ordinances, regulations, or policies by January 1, 2027, and communicate these requirements to their customers.

PRIOR CITY COUNCIL REVIEW

On June 22, 1999, Santa Rosa City Council, by Ordinance No. 3426, amended Section 14-04.210 of the Santa Rosa City Code by adding subsection (E) to provide for disconnection of service for water waste and adding Chapter 14-21 entitled "Water Waste Regulations".

On September 18, 2007, Santa Rosa City Council, by Ordinance No. 3845, approved the inclusion of recycled water into Chapter 14-21 Water Waste Regulations.

On October 24, 2023, Santa Rosa City Council, by Ordinance No. ORD-2023-014, approved the inclusion of administrative fines, exceptions and an appeals process into Chapter 14-21 Water Waste Regulations.

ANALYSIS

Staff recommends amending the City's Water Waste Regulations to comply with the requirements of AB 1572. The proposed amendments would prohibit the irrigation of

INTRODUCE AN ORDINANCE AMENDING SANTA ROSA CITY CODE CHAPTER 14-21 WATER WASTE REGULATIONS
PAGE 3 OF 4

nonfunctional turf with potable water at covered commercial, industrial, and institutional properties, excluding cemeteries, and within common areas of homeowners' associations, common interest developments, and community service organizations. The amendments also would establish the applicable compliance deadlines and add definitions needed to administer the prohibition. The existing enforcement procedures would remain in effect.

Adopting this ordinance is a proactive step in protecting Santa Rosa's water supply, supporting the long-term sustainability of our region, and reducing the financial and regulatory risks associated with noncompliance. This action reflects the City's commitment to responsible water management and ensures compliance with state mandates while serving the best interests of our ratepayers, residents, and local businesses.

The proposed revisions to Chapter 14-21 Water Waste Regulations are shown in redline form in Attachment 2.

FISCAL IMPACT

Approval of the proposed action would have no impact on the General Fund or Water Enterprise Fund. Staff time necessary to administer and enforce the amended Water Waste Regulations is included in Santa Rosa Water's Operations and Maintenance budget.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

The recommended action is categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Sections 15307 (Class 7 – Actions by Regulatory Agencies for Protection of Natural Resources) and 15308 (Class 8 – Actions by Regulatory Agencies for Protection of the Environment) because the ordinance implements state-mandated restrictions on the use of potable water to irrigate nonfunctional turf in order to conserve water and protect California's water resources. None of the exceptions to the categorical exemptions identified in CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2 apply. In the alternative, the recommended action is exempt pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3) because it can be seen with certainty that the ordinance will not have a significant effect on the environment.

BOARD/COMMISSION/COMMITTEE REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS

On February 11, 2026, the Board of Public Utilities Water Conservation Subcommittee recommended, by motion, the Board of Public Utilities recommend that the City Council adopt the proposed revisions to Santa Rosa City Code Chapter 14-21 Water Waste Regulations, as described.

INTRODUCE AN ORDINANCE AMENDING SANTA ROSA CITY CODE CHAPTER 14-21 WATER WASTE REGULATIONS
PAGE 4 OF 4

On June 18, 2026, the Board of Public Utilities, by resolution, recommended that the City Council adopt the proposed ordinance thereby amending Santa Rosa City Code Chapter 14-21 Water Waste Regulations.

NOTIFICATION

Notice of public hearing was published in the Press Democrat on Tuesday, August 4, 2026.

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1 – Board of Public Utilities' Resolution No. RES-2026-010
- Attachment 2 – Ordinance No. XX (Redline) of the City of Santa Rosa Amending Chapter 14-21 of the Santa Rosa City Code
- Ordinance

PRESENTER

Lisa Cuellar, Water Use Efficiency Coordinator