

El Dorado County Drought and Water Shortage Task Force Draft Charter

PURPOSE AND GOALS

The purpose of the El Dorado County Drought and Water Shortage Task Force (Task Force) is to facilitate drought and water shortage preparedness for small water systems throughout El Dorado County through proactive planning and coordination. It will serve as the venue for collaborative discussions related to drought and water shortage conditions, regulatory requirements, updates and implementation, and potential funding opportunities for water shortage actions.

BACKGROUND

Senate Bill (SB) 552 of 2021 is part of the implementation of the SB 606 and Assembly Bill 1668 of 2018 (collectively, 2018 Water Conservation and Drought Planning Legislation, or 2018 Legislation). As the conditions for small water suppliers and rural communities are diverse, the 2018 Legislation directs the California Department of Water Resources (DWR), in coordination with the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board), to develop recommendations to the Legislature for actions to improve drought planning for small water suppliers and rural communities. DWR organized a County Drought Advisory Group (CDAG) in 2018 to assist DWR in the vulnerability assessment and recommendation development. The El Dorado Water Agency (Agency) is a member of CDAG and provided input and perspectives from mountain counties and foothill communities.

The 2018 Legislation did not provide a definition for small water suppliers or rural communities, although it was implied by the definition of urban water suppliers who are subject to the requirements in a separate part of the legislation. SB 552 (Hertzberg) provides such definitions and imposes new drought planning requirements on small water suppliers/systems throughout the state. One of these requirements includes formation of this Task Force. Specifically, Water Code Section 10609.70 states:

(a) (1) A county shall establish a standing county drought and water shortage task force to facilitate drought and water shortage preparedness for state small water systems and domestic wells within the county's jurisdiction, and shall invite representatives from the state and other local governments, including groundwater sustainability agencies, and community-based organizations, local water suppliers, and local residents, to participate in the task force.

(2) In lieu of the task force required by paragraph (1), a county may establish an alternative process that facilitates drought and water shortage preparedness for state small water systems and domestic wells within the county's jurisdiction. The alternative process shall provide opportunities for coordinating and communicating with the state and other local governments, community-based organizations, local water suppliers, and local residents on a regular basis and during drought or water shortage emergencies."

Consistent with the Agency's authority under the 1959 El Dorado County Water Agency Act, and through a 2018 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Agency and the County of El Dorado (County), the Agency was designated to prepare the Countywide Water Management Plan, which is satisfied by the Agency's 2019 Water Resources Development and Management Plan (WRDMP). The drought resiliency of small water systems and rural communities is within the scope of the WRDMP with recommended actions and resource management strategies. One of those strategies includes preparing the Upper American River Basin Regional Drought Contingency Plan (RDCP) to support drought planning and preparedness. Included within the scope of the RDCP are recommended mitigation actions—such as system consolidation or the development of a Water Shortage Contingency Plan—that would meet SB



County Drought and Water Shortage Task Force

552 requirements and improve the resiliency of small water systems in El Dorado County. The RDCP is anticipated to be finalized by Fall 2022.

Furthermore, the County requested the Agency's assistance in complying with requirements under SB 552 in coordination with the County's Environmental Management Department (EMD). EMD oversees the small water systems as the Local Primacy Agency with delegated authority from the State Water Board and permitting requirements for well drilling. On February 9, 2022 (County File #22-0202), the County's Board of Supervisors designated the Agency's Countywide Plenary for Water group to serve as the alternative process to formulating a Task Force. The Countywide Plenary for Water group meets biannually and provides an opportunity to coordinate water shortage planning with other planning efforts in El Dorado County, while also meeting the requirements of SB 552.

MEMBERSHIP

This Task Force is responsible for facilitating drought and water shortage preparedness for small water systems and domestic wells within El Dorado County and includes representatives such as local government, public water agencies, a groundwater sustainability agency, small water suppliers, schools, and citizen groups. The Task Force includes "core" members that are legally responsible for public water systems, state small water systems, and domestic wells and implementing the requirements of SB 552. The Task Force also includes "advisory" members that are relied on for information and input related to drought conditions, small water system needs, and potential response actions.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Members

Core Task Force members are expected to:

- Review current drought conditions using tools provided by the U.S. Drought Monitor and state agencies, identify drought-related issues that will impact county residents, and develop actionable solutions to address identified problems.
- Provide support during SB 552 implementation to meet regulatory compliance; this support will include the development of a County Plan for state small water systems and domestic wells.
- Disseminate Task Force findings/recommendations to the community.

Advisory Task Force members are expected to:

- Provide current water supply conditions, data, and feedback, when applicable, to support water shortage preparedness and response in El Dorado County.
- Disseminate Task Force findings/recommendations to the community and, when applicable, its customers.

El Dorado Water Agency

Consistent with its MOU with the County, the Agency will facilitate Task Force meetings and provide the venue for discussions related to SB 552 support and implementation.

ATTENDANCE AND MEETING SCHEDULE

It is anticipated that the Task Force will meet biannually, approximately every 6 months, to discuss updates and actions for water shortage planning and preparedness, and other SB 552 implementation. During drought or other water shortage events, the Task Force will meet more frequently to discuss emergency response actions to support county water users in having a reliable water supply. Attendance at every meeting is expected, or Task Force member can designate an alternate to attend on their behalf who has decision making authority.