

News Advisory
Salt Lake City Council
July 3, 2003

Public Hearing on Proposed Water Shortage Contingency Plan

The Salt Lake City Council will hold a public hearing Tuesday, July 8, on a proposed Water Shortage Contingency Plan. Given the prevailing semi-arid climate of the region and limited water resources available, an adequate supply of water is vitally important in maintaining a healthy and safe environment in the community. Salt Lake City's Department of Public Utilities is proposing a contingency plan to manage and prioritize water usage during times of water shortage caused by drought, facilities failure or other events. The plan contains graduated stages of water shortage severity and identifies water use response measures for each stage. The proposed ordinance will apply to all Salt Lake City water customers including customers outside of Salt Lake City's boundaries.

The public hearing will start at 7 p.m. in the City Council Chamber, Room 315, of the City & County Building, 451 South State Street. As in all public hearings held by the City Council, speakers will have up to two minutes each to comment on the proposed Water Shortage Contingency Plan.

The contingency plan includes guideline and criteria for determining the appropriate stage to be designated under various water supply and demand conditions. Each plan stage of water shortage is implemented by declaration of the Mayor, upon the recommendation of the Director of Public Utilities pursuant to the plan guidelines.

The five stages are characterized as follows:

STAGE 1 – ADVISORY: The public is informed as early as meaningful data become available that a possible shortage may occur.

STAGE 2 – MILD: This stage is initiated if supply conditions worsen and relies on voluntary cooperation and customer support to meet target consumption goals. During this stage, specific recommended actions are suggested and certain mandatory actions are identified for municipal customers, including parks, golf courses, schools, and other government facilities.

STAGE 3 – MODERATE: This stage is to be initiated if the Mild Stage does not result in the reduction needed. This stage has additional recommendations for residential or commercial customers and increasingly stringent mandatory actions for government-owned green space and facilities.

STAGE 4 – SEVERE: This stage is to be initiated if the Moderate Stage does not result in the reduction needed. The Severe Stage includes certain mandatory actions for residential and commercial customers.

STAGE 5 – CRITICAL: This stage addresses the most critical need for demand reduction and increases the number of restricted water uses and mandatory actions.

This City is currently in the moderate stage (stage 3). With continued conservation efforts, the Department of Public Utilities anticipates that stage four will not be necessary this year.

The plan provides for a process of enforcement including civil fines. The plan also provides for an appeals process with variances and exceptions based on history of effort or other specific circumstances.

LeRoy Hooton, Director of the Department of Public Utilities stated, “The ability for a community to withstand drought or other interruption of service, in a large part, depends on how well a community has prepared for an event. The greater the duration of the event, whether natural or man-made, the more critical it becomes that a community responds to the event in a planned and logical manner, based on knowledge of available water supplies and demand patterns. The threat of a water shortage to public health and safety, to economic viability, and to our quality of life depends on our ability to act clearly and decisively, with forethought and planning.”

The proposed water shortage contingency plan is available on the Internet at www.slch2o.com. For more information, please contact LeRoy Hooton or Stephanie Duer in the Department of Public Utilities, 483-6770, or Gary Mumford at the Salt Lake City Council Office, 535-7600.