



WEST BASIN MUNICIPAL WATER DISTRICT
17140 S. Avalon Blvd., Suite 210
Carson, CA 90746

AGENDA NO. 24

MAY 14, 2009 – Water Resources
Little (Chair), Gray
MAY 26, 2009 – Board Meeting
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Approved by: Rich Nagel

INFORMATION CALENDAR

GRAYWATER USAGE UPDATE

SUMMARY:

This memo provides an update on the current status of graywater use in the State of California. Graywater is water from washing machines, showers, bathtubs and bathroom sinks that can be used to irrigate landscapes outside the home. In order to use graywater legally, residents must first comply with permitting issues.

California's graywater standards are now part of the State Plumbing Code, making it legal to use graywater everywhere in California. These standards were developed and adopted in response to Assembly Bill 3518, the Graywater Systems for Single Family Residence Act of 1992. The Department of Water Resources developed a guide to help homeowners, landscape and plumbing contractors understand the Graywater Standards and to help them design, install and maintain graywater systems.

Challenges Permitting/Cost-Effectiveness

In 1992, the Legislation asked State health and housing officials to draw up a permit code to regulate and legalize graywater use. Appendix G of the State Plumbing Code requires that residents must get permits for graywater systems that contain many requirements for installation, filtration and inspections. Efforts are currently underway through new legislative efforts to review the current requirements and find ways to allow easier use of graywater, but still meet public health concerns.

Since 1992, only about 200 graywater systems throughout the State have been legally permitted.

According to research being conducted by the Metropolitan Water District's (MWD) Integrated Resource Planning Graywater Committee, a graywater system can range from a basic system costing \$650 to an intermediate system costing around \$5,000 to an advanced system costing over \$5,000. Initial research found that during the 15-year life of the intermediate and advanced systems that the intermediate system can save about 2.1 acre-feet (AF) of potable water for a cost per acre-foot of about \$2,500 and the advanced system can save 3.5 AF for a cost of about \$1,700 over 15 years. The cost would also include a \$162 annual maintenance outlay over the 15-year life, or roughly an additional \$2,430 dollars.

Current Efforts to Promote Graywater

Senate Bill 1258 (passed July 2, 2008) directs the Department of Housing and Community Development to develop a more wide-ranging set of standards for graywater systems for both indoor and outdoor uses. These new standards will then be recommended to the California Building Standards Commission for adoption.

The Water Environmental Research Foundation (W.E.R.F.) has launched a study, which West Basin Municipal Water District (West Basin) is involved with, to study the effects of using graywater on lawns, soils and plants. W.E.R.F. is working with several universities on conducting site studies in various states. The study will be completed by 2011 and will provide further helpful information to residents.

MWD IRP Process

Staff is currently participating on MWD's Integrated Resource Planning or (IRP) Workgroup effort to develop an Issue Paper on graywater. With recent growth in public awareness about graywater, MWD wanted to include graywater in its long-term 2035 planning horizon. The workgroup is currently developing recommendations to the Technical IRP Committee to consider. MWD would like to play an active role in supporting legislative efforts, but has concerns regarding the health issues surrounding graywater and the high acre-foot cost associated with the systems.

Staff will continue to provide the Board with periodic updates on graywater.

STRATEGIC BUSINESS PLAN IMPLEMENTATION:

Goal 5, Customer/Community Services – Provide for the needs of our customer agencies and the communities we serve in a way that reflects their needs.

COMMITMENT STATEMENT:

Customer Service – West Basin is committed to providing value by understanding and meeting the needs of our customers and the communities we serve.

FISCAL IMPACTS:

Not applicable.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE:

Not applicable.

COMMITTEE STATUS:

This item was reviewed by the Water Resources Committee meeting on May 14, 2009 and agendized to the May 26, 2009 Board meeting as information for discussion.

RECOMMENDED MOTION:

This item is for information only.

LIST OF EXHIBITS:

EXHIBIT "A" – Los Angeles Time Article, "**A solution to California's water shortage goes down the drain**"