



**CITY COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM NO. G.1**  
**08/22/2023**

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**SUBJECT:** Convert for Cash Water Conservation Rebate Program and Guidelines.

**DEPARTMENT:** Public Works

**STAFF:** Casey Wichert, Director of Public Works  
James Wolfe, Water Operations Manager  
Lindsey Ray, Water Conservation Specialist

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### **TITLE/RECOMMENDATION**

Adopt a Resolution approving the Convert for Cash Water Conservation Rebate Program and Guidelines which provide rebates for conversion of landscape to water efficient plants and drip irrigation, as well as replacement of appliances with water efficient models, in order to support continued efforts to use water more efficiently.

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

The Council approved FY 2023/24 Water Enterprise Operating Budget includes \$165,000 for drought outreach materials and incentives. The fiscal impact is dependent on the number of Convert for Cash rebate program applications received and approved for payment; however, it will not exceed the \$165,000 budget.

### **BACKGROUND**

#### **EXECUTIVE ORDERS, PROCLAMATIONS, AND REGULATIONS**

On July 8, 2021, the California Governor issued Executive Order N-10-21 calling for a voluntary reduction in water use by 15% compared to 2020 usage.

On October 19, 2021, the California Governor proclaimed a state-wide drought emergency.

On January 4, 2022, the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) adopted Emergency Regulations prohibiting wasteful water use.

On March 28, 2022, the California Governor issued Executive Order N-7-22 calling on Californians to limit summertime water use and requiring the SWRCB to consider



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adopting emergency regulations to require urban water suppliers to take actions identified in their water shortage contingency plans.

On May 24, 2022, the SWRCB adopted Resolution No. 2022-0018 requiring urban water suppliers to implement all demand reduction actions equivalent to stage two of their water shortage contingency plan.

On March 24, 2023, the California Governor issued Executive Order N-5-23 eliminating the need for certain provisions in the State Emergency Proclamations that directed action by state agencies, departments, and boards to mitigate the effects of the extreme drought conditions. Improved conditions helped rehabilitate surface water supplies, but have not abated the severe drought conditions that remain in some parts of the State.

**REBATE PROGRAM OVERVIEW**

In 2015, Council authorized staff to develop and implement a water conservation rebate program to incentivize City water utility customers (customers) to reduce potable water usage. This original program, called the Convert for Cash Water Conservation Rebate Program, included available rebates to customers who permanently converted areas of landscaping or replaced irrigation equipment that would permanently reduce a customer's volume of water use, as well as rebates for certain appliance replacements with water efficient models. The 2015 program proved successful with 594 conversion rebates paid, totaling approximately \$222,900, from June 2015 to June 2016, and an approximately \$300,000 in rebates paid through FY 16/17.

The Public Works Department will be implementing and utilizing an equivalent of the previous program, also called the Convert for Cash Water Conservation Rebate Program (Program). Through the Program, eligible customers can receive rebates for certain appliance or equipment replacements with water efficient models which includes:

- \$25 traditional toilet(s) replacement with high efficiency models
- \$50 traditional washing machine replacement
- \$50 pool cover purchase or replacement.

The Program will also include lawn and drip irrigation conversion rebates that are \$1 per square foot of lawn replaced, with a maximum residential combined rebate of \$1,000 and a maximum commercial combined rebate of \$5,000.



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There are several factors to consider in order for customers to qualify for the lawn conversion rebates. Lawns to be converted must:

- Be located in the front yard or in a publicly accessible area visible to the public, with a minimum of 300 square feet being converted, unless otherwise approved by City staff.
- Use enough plants (planted in the ground) so that at least 50% of the yard is covered once fully grown per Brentwood Muni Code 8.36.030. Tree canopy and plants outside of the converted area are not considered in the calculation, even if they are adjacent to or overhanging the converted area. Plants must be drought tolerant and adaptable to our local climate.
- Concrete and other non-permeable surfaces may be used but cannot make up more than 20% of the total area to be rebated. Artificial grass may also be used but cannot make up more than 20% of the total area to be rebated. The 50% plant coverage still applies to the entire area.
- Existing lawn sprinkler heads in the converted area must be removed. Any lawn areas remaining outside the converted area must be irrigated separately from the new landscape.

These rebates will be available to residential, commercial, and multi-family customers who receive potable water for their landscape through a metered service in the City. Rebates of \$25 or less will be credited on the customer's City utility account and rebates more than \$25 will be issued by check, with confirmation that the customer's City utility account is in "good standing."

The Program includes staff coordination and involvement from several departments such as Community Enrichment and Utility Billing. Staff anticipates to implement the Program in September 2023.

**CITY COUNCIL STRATEGIC INITIATIVE**

Not Applicable.

**PREVIOUS ACTION**

Previous Action by City Council is included on Attachment 1.

**DATE OF NOTICE**

Not Applicable.



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**ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION**

Not Applicable.

**ATTACHMENT(S)**

1. Previous Action
2. Resolution
3. Convert for Cash Guidelines