

CA Announces New Water Strategy: 500M Sq. Ft Of Turf To Be Converted By 2030

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Late last week, Governor Newsom of California announced a new comprehensive water supply strategy focusing on accelerated infrastructure projects that would better prepare the State for perpetual years of drought and address the ongoing crisis. Part of the plan relating to lawn and landscape work calls for: accelerating the transition of turf to landscapes that use less water; incentivizing such transitions; offering grants to disadvantaged communities to increase irrigation efficiency where needed; and enacting new irrigation efficiency standards.

The new plan, [California's Water Supply Strategy: Adapting to a Hotter, Drier Future](#), states, "To this end, the State will partner with local agencies to convert 500 million square feet of ornamental turf by 2030, with corresponding investments in programs and policies that incentivize turf conversion. Removal of 500 million square feet of turf could generate 66,000 acre-feet of water savings each year at an estimated cost of \$1 billion."

It goes on to say, "The California Department of Water Resources (DWR) will establish a grant program to support local efforts to replace ornamental turf with drought-tolerant landscaping and—where schools and parks require turf—to make turf irrigation and maintenance more efficient, with a focus on disadvantaged communities....The State Water Board will advance adoption of new long-term water use efficiency standards, per existing statute (2018).... Once DWR provides its formal recommendations, the Board will begin the process for enacting the regulation to ensure the rule will be in effect by January 1, 2024."

The new plan underscores the significant challenges ahead as a result of a changing climate, the need to transform the current system, and the importance of significantly investing in California systems to secure the future. It outlines supply strategies and pledges to fast track the advancement of policies and new projects while developing new supplies, expanding storage capacity above and below ground, increasing use efficiency, and improving forecasting, data, and management.

"Experts predict that California will lose 10% of our water supply by 2040. Governor Newsom's focus on building infrastructure is a significant step in the right direction...", said Paul Helliiker, general manager of San Juan Water District, and a leader in the [Solve the Water Crisis](#) Coalition, which includes more than 80 engaged water agencies and supports the Governor's leadership and steps forward in making urgently needed changes to California's system.

"The State's new plan to adapt to an increasingly hotter and drier climate will further protect our communities, economies, and industries from an ongoing crisis that has the potential to wreak havoc on California," said Heather Dyer, general manager of San Bernardino Valley Municipal Water District, and a leader in the Coalition.

For landscapers, the new rules provide opportunities for turf conversions, irrigation system upgrades, and installation of capture and reuse systems. To be prepared for these crucial changes coming to the landscape industry in arid areas, see [Turf's Water Issue](#) and articles including:

[The Drought-Wise Landscaper](#)

[Water Harvesting & Reuse For Landscapes](#)

[Three Essential Irrigation System Trends](#)

[The Best Drought & Flood Tolerant Plants](#)