

Carpinteria considers water restrictions

Fines of up to \$300 part of draft resolution; public hearing scheduled

By SARA BUSH NEWS-PRESS CORRESPONDENT
September 11, 2014 5:50 AM

The Carpinteria Valley Water District is considering an ordinance to place mandatory water restrictions on customers, including requiring restaurants to serve water only on request and restricting landscape irrigation to two days per week.

A draft resolution presented at Wednesday's meeting of the district's board of directors says "continued drought conditions have reduced local and state-wide water resources in excess of 15 percent of average annual demand."

The draft states that the possibility of water shortages within the district could exceed 15 percent of average annual demand within the next year and a half.

The proposed rules call for a \$25 fine for a first offense of violating water restrictions, and as much as a \$300 fine for a third offense, said General Manager Charles Hamilton.

A public hearing about the proposed ordinance is scheduled for the board's next regular meeting, 5:30 p.m. Sept. 24 at Carpinteria City Hall.

Director June Van Wingerden said Wednesday she will not vote for the ordinance if it includes fines, saying imposing financial consequences is not a good idea in a small community.

While customers have cut water use by 20 percent over the past several months, staff believes restrictions may be necessary to get the customers who are not conserving water on board.

"The community has responded very well," Mr. Hamilton said. "We've seen a 70 percent response rate from customers who are reducing water, but need to reach those who are not responding."

Also Wednesday, Mr. Hamilton updated the board about customers exporting groundwater.

"There is concern and criticism that well owners are exporting water from Carpinteria groundwater basin for personal profit and in doing so depleting the local groundwater resource to the disadvantage of all other groundwater users in the valley including the Carpinteria Valley Water District," Mr. Hamilton said.

He told the board that three district customers have been notified that their actions violate Santa Barbara County zoning code.

Suspected unpermitted water sales and trucking from Carpinteria should be reported to the Santa Barbara County Planning and Development Department, Mr. Hamilton said.

email: news@newspress.com