

## MOTION

The climate crisis has resulted in the western United States experiencing one of the most intense droughts on record. January through March of this year were the driest first three months in the state's recorded history, California's largest reservoirs are 70 percent below normal for this time of year, and the state's snowpack is just 14 percent of average.

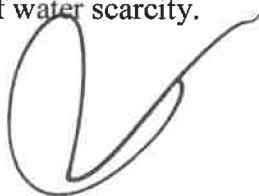
In July 2021, Governor Newsom called on Californians to voluntarily reduce their water use by 15 percent. At the end of March 2022, after the state failed to meet this goal, the Governor issued an Executive Order calling on local water agencies to step up their response to the ongoing drought. Phase III of the City's Emergency Water Conservation Plan Ordinance restricts outdoor watering to two days per week, with watering permitted at odd-numbered street addresses on Mondays and Fridays, and at even-numbered addresses on Thursdays and Sundays. Watering with sprinklers will be limited to eight minutes per station, and all watering will have to be done in the evening or early morning, with no watering permitted outdoors between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. These measures are projected to save between 156,000 acre-feet and 260,000 acre-feet per year, the equivalent of water used by 780,000 households in a year.

However, it remains vital to continue watering and caring for the City's trees, which capture stormwater, improve water quality and reduce flood risk, along with improving air quality by reducing ground-level ozone formation and mitigating the impacts of heat waves. As noted by the City's Chief Forest Officer, "trees are long-term investments in the health and well-being of our neighborhoods and require some water to withstand periods of reduced rainfall."

During the previous height of drought, urban trees across Southern California were hard hit by the heat, lack of rainwater, and a resulting increase of pests and disease. According to the *LA Times*, in 2015, the last and most intense year of a four-year drought that resulted in some of the driest conditions in California's recorded history, it is estimated that as many as 14,000 trees in L.A. parks - approximately 4 percent - may have died. Only about 1 percent of trees were found dead the year before that.

To mitigate drought and heat impacts on the City's tree canopy, arborists have recommend planting between October and April, applying mulch around trees to reduce water loss and keep the soil cool, and pruning less live growth as the tree's canopy helps shade the ground beneath it and retain soil moisture. The Bureau of Street Services, which maintains street trees, and the Department of Recreation and Parks, which maintains park trees, must comply with the same rules as all LADWP customers, and it is in the City's interest to develop a robust program to preserve Los Angeles' tree canopy in light of ongoing drought conditions.

Finally, the term "drought" is no longer truly applicable as the term implies a start and end-point. Because of the escalating breakdown of our once-healthy climate and our inability to continue to reliably store water as snow in high mountain regions, the western U.S. is entering a new era of water scarcity.

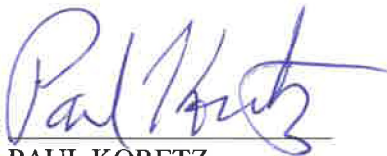


I THEREFORE MOVE that the City's Chief Forest Officer be instructed to partner with Streets LA, Urban Forestry Division, the Department of Recreation and Parks, LA Sanitation and its Biodiversity Expert panel, the Department of Water and Power, and other departments who engage with trees, to report on:

- 1) best practices for the long-term maintenance of the City's street trees and trees in City parks in light of persistent and worsening water scarcity conditions;
- 2) a cost impact analysis of City trees that are lost due to water scarcity conditions;
- 3) a proactive strategy to mitigate heat impacts on the City's trees, including but not limited to an updated planting schedule, prioritizing the receipt of tree planting in-lieu fees during sub-optimal planting seasons, mulching, holistic organics-first integrated pest management and disease prevention strategies, and prohibiting the trimming of live growth, except to address public safety issues;
- 4) a concerted plan to address tree maintenance at public facilities (ie. public housing facilities and parks) that are relied upon for cooling, recreation and enjoyment, and where trees in our region have the opportunity to grow the largest and provide the most benefits;
- 5) on the feasibility of developing a robust outreach and education campaign to encourage city residents to responsibly and appropriately maintain trees on private property.

I FURTHER MOVE that the Department of Water and Power be requested to report back on a public messaging strategy emphasizing that the City is in a new era of long-term "water scarcity" and should plan accordingly for future scarcity exacerbated by an unpredictable heating climate.

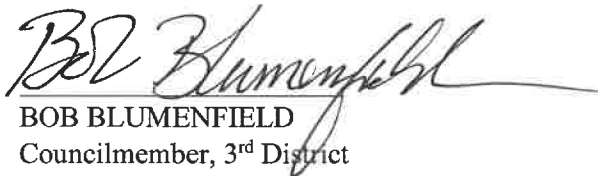
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JUN 01 2022

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