

4/25/2024

Subject: Water Forward Task Force Support for Water Conservation Plan and Drought Contingency Plan

Dear Austin City Council,

As members of the Austin Integrated Water Resource Planning Community (Water Forward) Task Force, we would like to express our support for approval of the Water Conservation Plan and Drought Contingency Plan for the City of Austin, to be considered at the May 2nd City Council meeting. These plans are important documents, particularly given the current drought conditions in the Highland Lakes watersheds and the ongoing work needed to advance the City's water conservation initiatives.

The updated Water Conservation Plan and Drought Contingency Plan outline programs, measures, and requirements aimed at promoting efficient water use, reducing water waste, and enhancing our ability to respond effectively to drought conditions in the short term. Furthermore, these plans align with the City's broader objectives of promoting environmental stewardship, fostering economic prosperity and affordability, and safeguarding the well-being of our residents.

As members of the Water Forward Task Force, we believe that intentional effort will be required by Austin Water to achieve and preferably surpass the five- and ten-year water savings goals and drought stage water use reduction targets set in these plans. We support the City placing continued strong emphasis and focus on water conservation, water-loss mitigation, and water reuse program implementation as well as water use restriction enforcement in pursuit of these goals.

By approving these plans, the Austin City Council will reaffirm its commitment to proactive water management while emphasizing the need to strengthen current and future water conservation programs. Moreover, it will demonstrate leadership in addressing the pressing challenges posed by the current drought and climate change, both of which have significant implications for our region's long-term viability. With Central Texas experiencing prolonged periods of drought, it is key that we adopt comprehensive strategies to conserve our precious water resources and mitigate the impacts of water scarcity.

Thank you for your attention to this matter, and we look forward to your favorable consideration.

Sincerely,

AUSTIN INTEGRATED WATER RESOURCE PLANNING COMMUNITY TASK FORCE

Jennifer Walker, Chair