

● **Board of Directors**
Communications and Legislation Committee

June 12, 2007 Board Meeting

8-7

Subject

Express Support for AB 566 (Plescia, R-San Diego): Development of a Standard Protocol for Evapotranspiration Data

Description

Staff recommends that the Board support Assembly Bill 566 by Assemblyman George Plescia (R-San Diego) ([Attachment 1](#)). The bill would develop and enhance existing technology that provides weather-based data for optimal irrigation schedules by appropriating \$360,000 to expand and complete the California Irrigation Management Information System (CIMIS) administered by the Department of Water Resources (DWR). Passage would establish a tool for improved efficiency in irrigation practices

CIMIS provides irrigation water demand data for urban and agricultural water managers and some weather-based irrigation control devices. The data is derived from a limited network of specialized weather stations on a near real-time basis. The expanded system would use satellite data coupled with data from CIMIS stations. The current network of specialized weather stations is sparse, creating significant gaps in geographic coverage. The expanded CIMIS capabilities would eliminate the gaps.

The data would be valuable for accomplishing water conservation, reducing urban runoff and improving water quality. It would be available at no charge to irrigators, irrigation controller manufacturers, water purveyors, researchers, and others. DWR has partnered with the University of California at Davis to develop the proposed satellite and ground-station system.

AB 566 would expand CIMIS data throughout the entire state by the following actions:

- Authorizes \$200,000 for DWR to complete the development of a standardized data protocol to ensure CIMIS data is available in an easily accessible, standard, and useable format.
- Authorizes \$160,000 to continue operating DWR's network of specialized weather stations to allow CIMIS data to be generated and made available to all regions of the state.

Policy

By Minute Item 44974 dated August 20, 2002, the Board authorized incentives for weather-based irrigation controllers for residential use.

By Minute Item 45208, dated February 11, 2003, the Board adopted policy principles regarding water conservation, including supporting legislation, regulations and voluntary programs that promote water use efficiency.

By Minute Item 45904 dated September 14, 2004, the Board authorized incentives for weather-based irrigation controllers for commercial sites.

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

CEQA determination for Option #1:

The proposed action is not defined as a project under CEQA because it involves continuing administrative activities, such as general policy and procedure making (Section 15378(b)(2) of the State CEQA Guidelines). In addition, where it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the proposed action in question may

have a significant effect on the environment, the proposed action is not subject to CEQA (Section 15061(b)(3) of the State CEQA Guidelines).

The CEQA determination is: Determine that the proposed action is not subject to CEQA pursuant to Sections 15378(b)(2) and 15061(b)(3) of the State CEQA Guidelines.

CEQA determination for Option #2:

None required

Board Options

Option #1

Adopt the CEQA determination and, as described above, authorize support for Assembly Bill 566 (Plescia).

Fiscal Impact: None

Business Analysis: Metropolitan would benefit from improved water reliability due to increased conservation and reduced runoff from better irrigation control by weather-based irrigation controllers using CIMIS data.

Option #2

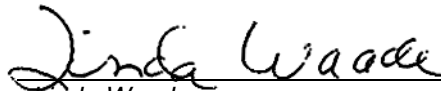
Take no position on Assembly Bill 566 (Plescia).

Fiscal Impact: None

Business Analysis: Progress on the adoption of weather-based irrigation controllers, water conservation and runoff reduction would be restricted without statewide availability of CIMIS data.

Staff Recommendation

Option #1


Linda Waade
Deputy General Manager, External Affairs

5/25/2007
Date


Jeffrey Kightlinger
General Manager

5/25/2007
Date

Attachment 1 – AB 566 Proposed Amendments

BLA #5464

AB 566 – PROPOSED AMENDMENTS

BILL NUMBER: AB 566 AMENDED
BILL TEXT

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY APRIL 16, 2007

INTRODUCED BY Assembly Member Plescia

FEBRUARY 21, 2007

An act to amend Section 65596 of the Government Code, relating to water conservation , and making an appropriation therefore

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. The Legislature hereby finds and declares all of the following:

(a) The state's growth requires policymakers to seek creative ways to maximize the use of water resources and employ technology to conserve water whenever possible.

(b) The state's agricultural industry, as well as residential landscapers, pest control managers, park and golf course operators, water agencies, and large urban irrigators rely on the California Irrigation Management Information System to provide evapotranspiration data that allows them to develop weather based, water budgeting methods of irrigation. A recent study found that the California Irrigation Management Information System generates \$64.7 million in annual benefits to the state, at an annual cost of only eight hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$850,000).

(c) Completing the development of standard data protocol for ~~the transmission of~~ evapotranspiration data and ~~extending~~ enhancing statewide coverage of CIMIS data the California Irrigation Management Information System statewide will allow significant improvements in landscape management and irrigation scheduling, thereby saving significant amounts of water. Studies have shown a savings of 37 gallons per day for residential irrigation, and 545 gallons per day for nonresidential irrigation, as well as runoff reduction of up to 50 percent when weather based irrigation controllers using evapotranspiration data are installed.

(d) The expansion of the California Irrigation Management Information System, and the use of evapotranspiration data in irrigation has other environmental benefits as well. The reduction in urban runoff that results can lead to improved water quality, and for every one acre foot of water saved, there is a corresponding reduction of one ton of air emissions, according to the California Irrigation Management Information System Urban Resource Book, May 2000.

~~SECTION 1. SEC. 2. Section 65596 of the Government Code is amended to read: —65596. The updated model ordinance adopted pursuant to Section~~

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~~65595 shall do all the following in order to reduce water use:~~

- ~~—(a) Include provisions for water conservation and the appropriate use and groupings of plants that are well adapted to particular sites and to particular climatic, soil, or topographic conditions. The model ordinance shall not prohibit or require specific plant species, but it may include conditions for the use of plant species or encourage water conserving plants. However, the model ordinance shall not include conditions that have the effect of prohibiting or requiring specific plant species.~~
- ~~—(b) Include a landscape water budget component that establishes the maximum amount of water to be applied through the irrigation system, based on climate, landscape size, irrigation efficiency, and plant needs.~~
- ~~—(c) Promote the benefits of consistent local ordinances in neighboring areas.~~
- ~~—(d) Encourage the capture and retention of stormwater onsite to improve water use efficiency or water quality.~~
- ~~—(e) Include provisions for the use of automatic irrigation systems and irrigation schedules based on climatic conditions, specific terrains and soil types, and other environmental conditions. The model ordinance shall include references to local, state, and federal laws and regulations regarding standards for water conserving irrigation equipment. The model ordinance shall include climate information for irrigation scheduling based on the California Irrigation Management Information System.~~
- ~~(f) Include provisions for onsite soil assessment and soil management plans that include grading and drainage to promote healthy plant growth and to prevent excessive erosion and runoff, and the use of mulches in shrub areas, garden beds, and landscaped areas where appropriate.~~
- ~~—(g) Promote the use of recycled water consistent with Article 4 (commencing with Section 13520) of Chapter 7 of Division 7 of the Water Code.~~
- ~~—(h) Seek to educate water users on the efficient use of water and the benefits of doing so.~~
- ~~—(i) Address regional differences, including fire prevention needs.~~
- ~~—(j) Exempt landscaping that is part of a registered historical site.~~
- ~~—(k) Encourage the use of economic incentives to promote the efficient use of water.~~
- ~~—(l) Include provisions for landscape maintenance practices that foster long term landscape water conservation. Landscape maintenance practices may include, but are not limited to, performing routine irrigation system repair and adjustments, conducting water audits, and prescribing the amount of water applied per landscaped acre.~~
- ~~—(m) Include provisions to minimize landscape irrigation overspray and runoff.~~

SEC. 3. (a) The Department of Water Resources shall complete the development of a standard data protocol for ~~the~~

AB 566 – PROPOSED AMENDMENTS

~~transmission of~~ evapotranspiration data, to ensure that the data is ~~transmitted available~~ in an easily accessible, standard, and usable format throughout the state, and made available through the California Irrigation Management Information System.

(b) The Department of Water Resources shall continue the operation of the California Irrigation Management Information System to allow evapotranspiration data to be generated for, ~~transmitted to,~~ and made available to, all regions of the state.

(c) The sum of three hundred sixty thousand dollars (\$360,000) is hereby appropriated from the General Fund to the Department of Water Resources to perform the duties required by this section, to be allocated as follows:

(1) Two hundred thousand dollars (\$200,000) shall be allocated to further the purposes of subdivision (a).

(2) One hundred sixty thousand dollars (\$160,000) shall be allocated to further the purposes of subdivision (b).