
SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES AND WATER

Senator Henry Stern, Chair

2019 - 2020 Regular

Bill No: SB 668 **Hearing Date:** April 23, 2019
Author: Rubio
Version: February 22, 2019
Urgency: No **Fiscal:** Yes
Consultant: Dennis O'Connor

Subject: Fire hydrants: water suppliers: regulations

BACKGROUND AND EXISTING LAW

1) The California Emergency Services Act, among other things:

a) Requires all public water systems with 10,000 or more service connections to:

i) Review and revise their disaster preparedness plans in conjunction with related agencies, including, but not limited to, local fire departments and the Office of Emergency Services to ensure that the plans are sufficient to address possible disaster scenarios.

These plans should examine and review pumping station and distribution facility operations during an emergency, water pressure at both pumping stations and hydrants, and whether there is sufficient water reserve levels and alternative emergency power, including, but not limited to, onsite backup generators and portable generators.

ii) Following a declared state of emergency, to furnish an assessment of their emergency response and recommendations to the Legislature within six months after each disaster, as well as implementing the recommendations in a timely manner.

b) Requires the Office of Emergency Services to establish appropriate and insofar as practical, emergency response and recovery plans, including mutual aid plans, in coordination with public water systems with 10,000 or more service connections.

2) The Urban Water Management Planning Act defines “urban water suppliers” as “a supplier, either publicly or privately owned, providing water for municipal purposes either directly or indirectly to more than 3,000 customers or supplying more than 3,000 acre-feet of water annually. An urban water supplier includes a supplier or contractor for water, regardless of the basis of right, which distributes or sells for ultimate resale to customers. This part applies only to water supplied from public water systems ...”

PROPOSED LAW

This bill, as proposed to be amended (see Author’s Proposed Amendments below), would:

- 1) Change the requirement for water agencies having to comply with the disaster preparedness plans from public water systems with 10,000 or more service connections to urban water suppliers.
- 2) Require disaster preparedness plans to be reviewed and revised every five years.

ARGUMENTS IN SUPPORT

According to the sponsors, “On behalf of the California Water Association (CWA), we write in support of SB 668, which would update existing statute to require smaller water systems to develop disaster preparedness plans in conjunction with local fire departments and the Office of Emergency Services.”

“The suggested amendments in the committee analysis are consistent with CWA’s interest in ensuring that all water providers in the State of California are prepared for disaster events, including wildfires.”

ARGUMENTS IN OPPOSITION: None Received

COMMENTS

Recent Fires Highlight Value Of Water Agencies Having Disaster Preparedness Plans. The sponsors shared this anecdote. “California Water Service (Cal Water) is one of the drinking water suppliers that serves the areas affected by the 2018 Woolsey Fire, including the City of Thousand Oaks. During the height of the fire, crews battling the fire were pulling about five times more water from the system than its normal daily demand, which pushed available stored water supplies to the brink. To avoid a crisis that would have left everyone from homeowners to firefighters without water, Cal Water’s team worked with firefighters, law enforcement, and wholesale water agencies to replenish available water suppliers. These efforts, which included transporting emergency equipment about 50 miles from another Cal Water service area with the help of the California Highway Patrol, would not have been possible without appropriate disaster preparedness and planning; without it, Cal Water would not have been able to respond to the emergency as effectively and efficiently as it did.”

Why The Change To Urban Water Suppliers? This bill would expand the number of water agencies needing to review and revise disaster preparedness plans from those with 10,000 or more service connections to those with 3,000 customers or supplying more than 3,000 acre-feet a year (acfy). The 3,000 customer/3,000 acfy threshold triggers much of California water planning and management, including:

- Adopting urban water management plans,
- Adopting water shortage contingency plans,
- Complying with the new urban water use objectives and water use reporting requirements, and
- Requiring water meters.

AUTHOR'S PROPOSED AMENDMENTS**Delete existing language and insert**

Section 86072 of the Government Code is amended to read:

86072. (a) All urban water suppliers, as defined in Section 10617 of the Water Code, ~~All public water systems, as defined in subdivision (f) of Section 116275 of the Health and Safety Code, with 10,000 or more service connections~~ shall review and revise their disaster preparedness plans in conjunction with related agencies, including, but not limited to, local fire departments and the Office of Emergency Services to ensure that the plans are sufficient to address possible disaster scenarios. These plans should examine and review pumping station and distribution facility operations during an emergency, water pressure at both pumping stations and hydrants, and whether there is sufficient water reserve levels and alternative emergency power, including, but not limited to, onsite backup generators and portable generators. Urban water suppliers shall review and revise these plans every five years.

(b) In addition to the requirements in subdivision (a), all urban water suppliers, as defined in Section 10617 of the Water Code, ~~All public water systems, as defined in subdivision (f) of Section 116275 of the Health and Safety Code, with 10,000 or more service connections~~ following a declared state of emergency shall furnish an assessment of their emergency response and recommendations to the Legislature within six months after each disaster, as well as implementing the recommendations in a timely manner.

(c) The Office of Emergency Services shall establish appropriate and insofar as practical, emergency response and recovery plans, including mutual aid plans, in coordination with ~~public water systems, as defined in subdivision (f) of Section 116275 of the Health and Safety Code, with 10,000 or more service connections~~ urban water suppliers, as defined in Section 10617 of the Water Code.

SUPPORT

California Water Association (Sponsor)
California Water Service

OPPOSITION

None Received

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