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Drought Mitigation Policy

Updated March 16, 2022

The Patterson Irrigation District (District) shall apportion water to each District delivery facility in a manner to assure fair and equitable distribution of water to the entire District.

Factors affecting the distribution of water to lateral systems include wateruser demand, available water supplies, and effective reuse of return flows. The Distribution System Operators (DSOs), under the supervision of the Watermaster, shall distribute water within the District in a fair and equitable manner.

Rationing

During times of drought, available water supplies can be very uncertain. Tier I allocations may be lower than historically provided. During times of water shortages caused either by a short water supply in the San Joaquin River, emergency, or a situation where demand exceeds the available capacity of District distribution facilities and supplies, the DSO shall, under the supervision of the District Watermaster and the General Manager, implement a water rationing plan within the District according to the following conditions:

- a. District landowners/waterusers have first priority for delivery of available water supplies. Delivery to waterusers through Out-Of-District Contracts to Priority Area I and II lands shall be curtailed and/or cease depending on available supplies in order to meet in-District demands.
- b. Whenever demands within the District exceed the supply of water available to the District, rationing shall be conducted so as to distribute the supply of water evenly throughout the acreage demanding water service, both by available capacity and by volume.
- c. When it is projected that demands will exceed available supplies for an extended period of time, Tier II water supplies available beyond the Tier I allocation will be made on a monthly basis and will be subject to many factors including hydrology, available water supplies including the San Joaquin River, facilities capacity, State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) regulatory actions, etc. These

allocations will vary, but could range from three (3) to nine (9) acre-inches per acre, per month (0.25 to 0.75 acre-feet per acre, per month) or less.

- d. Landowners/water users are reminded that they may leave ground fallow, or abandon a crop and transfer that supply to other fields owned and/or operated by the same landowner/water user. All requests for transfer of water allocation shall be made in advance of irrigation
- e. A wateruser shall be allowed a ration comparable to the total number of acres he/she operates. The District Assessment Roll shall be used in determining the operator of each field or parcel.
- f. A wateruser shall be allowed to combine and distribute his/her ration amongst fields he/she operates except where lateral capacity is exceeded and fair distribution of water to others is jeopardized.
- g. Waterusers may mutually agree to combine and reciprocate his/her ration with another wateruser if approved by the DSO.
- h. Waterusers who operate fields in more than one lateral system will receive computed rations in each respective system if necessary.
- i. Water quality cannot be guaranteed any District conveyance facility.
- j. Individual situations may be subject to the discretion of the General Manager and District staff, and will be handled on a case by case basis. **It is the District's intention to work with all landowners and water users with flexibility to distribute water as fairly and equitably as possible with minimal disruption.**
- k. Winter water availability will be subject to hydrology and a determination made at a later date.

Landowner Groundwater Program

In addition to rationing, the District will allow grower to grower groundwater wheeling through District facilities.

- a. The well owner must have a registered well through the PID GSA that has a meter in compliance with the policy.
 - 1. No wheeling shall be permitted if the well owner does not have a meter
 - 2. District fines will be assessed in the event the well owner fails to comply with this policy

- b. Well water may only be introduced if the District is unable to provide water to the grower downstream of the well in need of irrigation.
- c. Priority of use in PID's system will be for District surface and groundwater then any supplemental water from well owners.
- d. PID will invoice the recipient of the water on the current PID wheeling rate.

Surface Water Transfers into the District

At the General Manager's discretion during drought periods, the District may allow transfers involving the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) Delta Mendota Canal (DMC) facilities to occur into the District. These transfers must involve the same landowner/water user. All charges related to the transfer including charges levied by Reclamation, the San Luis & Delta Mendota Water Authority, and PID administrative costs, shall be paid by the landowner. Transfers must conform to Reclamation Law. Transfer water from the DMC that cannot be delivered directly to landowners will be blended in District facilities and be subjected to a 5-percent loss. Schedules for transfers including quantity must be submitted to the PID office and the General Manager at their discretion may authorize the transfer, but only in writing.