AR 1042 Nonfunctional Turf Prohibitions

Approved: September 17, 2026

State law prohibits the use of potable water to irrigate "nonfunctional turf." (*See* Assembly Bill No. 1572, 2023-2024 Reg. Sess.; Water Code section 10608.14.) This Administrative Regulation amends the District's policies and regulations to include the applicable requirements of that law.

Definitions Related to Turf Prohibitions

The following definitions govern the construction of this Administrative Regulation:

(a) "**Commercial water user**" means a water user that provides or distributes a product or service.

(b) "**Common area**" means that portion of a common interest development or of a property owned or managed by a homeowners' association or a community service organization or similar entity that is not assigned or allocated to the exclusive use of the occupants of an individual dwelling unit within the property.

(c) "**Common interest development**" has the same meaning as in Section 4100 of the Civil Code.

(d) "**Community service organization or similar entity**" has the same meaning as in Section 4110 of the Civil Code.

(e) "**Community space**" means an area designated by a property owner or a governmental agency to accommodate human foot traffic for civic, ceremonial, or other community events or social gatherings.

(f) "**Disadvantaged community**" means a community with an annual median household income that is less than 80 percent of the statewide annual median household income.

(g) "**Functional turf**" means a ground cover surface of turf located in a recreational use area or community space. Turf enclosed by fencing or other barriers to permanently preclude human access for recreation or assembly is not functional turf.

(h) "**Homeowners' association**" means an "association" as defined in Section 4080 of the Civil Code.

(i) "**Industrial water user**" means a water user that is primarily a manufacturer or processor of materials as defined by the North American Industry Classification System code sectors 31 to 33, inclusive, or an entity that is a water user primarily engaged in research and development.

(j) "**Institutional water user**" means a water user dedicated to public service. This type of user includes, among other users, higher education institutions, schools, courts, churches, hospitals, government facilities, and nonprofit research institutions.

(k) "**Nonfunctional turf**" means any turf that is not functional turf, and includes turf located within street rights-of-way and parking lots.

(l) "**Potable water**" means water that is suitable for human consumption.

(m) "**Public water system**" has the same meaning as defined in Section 116275 of the

Health and Safety Code.

(n) "**Recreational use area**" means an area designated by a property owner or a governmental agency to accommodate human foot traffic for recreation, including, but not limited to sports fields, golf courses, playgrounds, picnic grounds, or pet exercise areas. This recreation may be either formal or informal.

(o) "**Turf**" has the same meaning as defined in Section 491 of Title 23 of the California Code of Regulations, which defines "turf" as a ground cover surface of mowed grass.

Nonfunctional Turf Prohibitions

A. The use of potable water for the irrigation of nonfunctional turf located on commercial, industrial, and institutional properties, other than a cemetery, and on properties of homeowners' associations, common interest developments, and community service organizations or similar entities is prohibited as of the following dates:
   (1) All properties owned by the Department of General Services, beginning January 1, 2027.
   (2) All properties owned by local governments, local or regional public agencies, and public water systems, except those specified in paragraph (5), beginning January 1, 2027.
   (3) All other institutional properties and all commercial and industrial properties, beginning January 1, 2028.
   (4) All common areas of properties of homeowners' associations, common interest developments, and community service organizations or similar entities, beginning January 1, 2029.
   (5) All properties owned by local governments, local public agencies, and public water systems in a disadvantaged community, beginning January 1, 2031, or the date upon which a state funding source is made available to fund conversion of nonfunctional turf on these properties to climate-appropriate landscapes, whichever is later.

B. Notwithstanding subdivision (A), the use of potable water is not prohibited to the extent necessary to ensure the health of trees and other perennial non-turf plantings, or to the extent necessary to address an immediate health and safety need.

C. The State Water Resources Control Board may, upon a showing of good cause for reasons including economic hardship, critical business need, and potential impacts to human health or safety, postpone a compliance deadline in subdivision (A) by up to three years for certain persons, institutions, and businesses, and may create a form to be used for compliance certification to the State Water Resources Control Board by property owners.

Enforcement and Penalties

Pursuant to state law, noncompliance by a person or entity with these turf prohibitions shall be subject to civil liability and penalties set forth in Water Code section 1846, or to civil liability and penalties imposed by an urban retail water supplier pursuant to a locally adopted ordinance or policy.