

## Water Conservation vs Water Curtailment

Water conservation refers to continuous long-term voluntary efforts aimed at efficient daily habits to reduce water waste, such as fixing leaks or upgrading to efficient fixtures and promotes sustainable usage.

Conversely, water curtailment is temporary, emergency response and activated only when supply is threatened. This involves mandatory, short-term restrictions on water use, such as prohibiting outdoor watering. Curtailment is a requirement to reduce water use due to a water shortage. It could be triggered by water provider system failure, power outage, fire in the watershed, prolonged drought, or other event that temporarily limits our ability to provide the normal amount of water. The Chart below shows the key differences.

### Key Differences

Feature	Water Conservation	Water Curtailment
<b>Primary Goal</b>	Long-term sustainability and efficiency.	Immediate reduction during a crisis.
<b>Trigger</b>	Ongoing lifestyle habits or operational standards.	Drought, natural disasters, or system failures.
<b>Duration</b>	Permanent and continuous.	Temporary and short-term.
<b>Typical Actions</b>	Fixing leaks, low-flow fixtures, and water-wise landscaping.	Banning outdoor watering, car washing, or pool filling.
<b>Enforcement</b>	Often voluntary or incentive-based.	Often mandatory with potential fines for violations.

This can also be thought of as voluntary actions vs. mandatory actions. While both involve reducing water usage, **water conservation** is a permanent, proactive strategy for efficiency, whereas **curtailment** is a reactive, emergency measure to address immediate shortages.

All CRWP members have Water Curtailment Plans as part of their Water Management and Conservation Plans that they are required to have for the State. All Curtailment Plans follow a tiered "Stage of Alert" system that increases in severity as water shortage increases. This typically includes four curtailment stages and each of these stages have initiating conditions, or triggers, that define when these stages are implemented.

- **Stage 1 (Potential/Mild):** Public alerts and requests for voluntary reductions in outdoor use.
- **Stage 2-3 (Serious/Severe):** Mandatory restrictions on specific "extracurricular" water activities like power washing or lawn irrigation.
- **Stage 4 (Critical/Emergency):** Prohibiting all non-essential uses, including total bans on landscape irrigation, to preserve water for human consumption, sanitation, and fire protection.

### **What does this mean for this summer?**

Using water efficiently all year round is always important, it is even more important during the summer months when our water use doubles and triples in our communities and our water treatment plants are running at maximum capacity on the hottest days of summer. While we don't think that Curtailment Plans will need to be implemented this summer, we are strongly encouraging people to look at ways to water their lawns more efficiently or to voluntarily not water them at all. This will help ensure that there will be enough water in the river for fish, recreation and other uses when river flows are at their lowest.