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Drought Mitigation Policy

Adopted January 31, 2014

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 be implementing a formal Landowner Groundwater Program. The District will sign well lease agreements with landowners who own groundwater facilities which can be discharged into the District distribution system. Summary of the well lease agreements include the following provisions:

- a. The District will have the ability to call on and operate the well during the irrigation season, when the well is not being used for the irrigation benefit of the well owner's property. PID will provide regular maintenance of the well facilities during this time.

- b. The District will compensate the landowner per acre-foot for water pumped in for the District at a fee to be determined by the Board of Directors. This fee shall be inclusive of all costs related to energy, capital, and operations and maintenance for time of district operation.
- c. PID may install a propeller-type flow meter for the purposes of accounting for the water pumped into the District facilities.

The use of private well water involving District facilities will be subject to the Rules and Regulations for the Distribution of Water within Patterson Irrigation District.

Surface Water Transfers into the District

At the Board'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 upon request.