

THE SACRAMENTO BEE

California board approves emergency drought rules for toilets, faucets sold after Jan. 1

BY JIM MILLER APRIL 8, 2015

Faucets, toilets and urinals sold after Jan. 1 will have to use much less water under emergency drought regulations approved Wednesday by the California Energy Commission.

Acting under the authority of Gov. Jerry Brown's [drought executive order](#) earlier this month, the energy commission voted unanimously for the [higher water efficiency standards](#), which will reduce water flow limits by half or more for some appliances.

Officials said the move will save 10.3 billion gallons of water in the first year, as well as 30.6 million therms of natural gas and 218 gigawatt hours of electricity. Water savings will total an estimated 730 billion gallons over 10 years, they said.

"It's a great opportunity in California for water-efficient devices now and in the future," commission Chairman Robert B. Weisenmiller said.

Under the new rules, bathroom faucets for sale after Jan. 1 could use no more than 1.2 gallons per minute, down from the current 2.2 gallons per minute. Kitchen faucets would be reduced from 2.2 gallons per minute to 1.8 gallons per minute. Public bathroom faucets would be reduced from 2.2 gallons per minute to a half-gallon.

In addition, wall-mounted urinals could use no more than 0.125 gallons of water, down from half a gallon. Wednesday's vote also sets a 1.28 gallon maximum water flow for toilets, putting in place a limit included in a 2007 law but never formally translated into water-efficiency regulations.

Wednesday's vote does not apply to shower heads, which currently are capped at 2.5 gallons of water per minute.

According to the energy commission, California has 30 million toilets, 1 million urinals and more than 45 million faucets of various types. The agency said the new rules will not increase the cost of the fixtures. Representatives of several faucet manufacturers spoke in favor of the proposed regulations.

The vote is the latest government attempt to increase water efficiency standards in homes and businesses. Since the 1990s, new homes have had to include various water-saving features. In Jan. 1, 2014, [a 2009 law took effect](#) requiring the installation of water-saving toilets, shower heads and faucets during any remodels or improvements to a single-family home more than 20 years old.

Brown's April 1 executive order, the first mandatory water cutbacks in California history, directs California's more than 3,000 urban water providers to collectively reduce their water use by 25 percent below 2013 levels.