June 15, 2015

Dear Stanford faculty, students, staff, residents and lessees:

As you know, the California drought persists. The campus community has responded well, and we have seen measurable reductions in campus water use. But I’m writing now to ask you to do more.

Beginning immediately, irrigation for all campus lawns and ornamental landscapes using domestic water—including faculty and staff housing—will again be restricted to Tuesday and Saturday nights for even numbered addresses, and Wednesday and Sunday nights for odd numbered addresses and areas without addresses, between the hours of 7 p.m. and 7 a.m. This schedule is the same as last year. Many of you have already made water conservation adjustments, and I thank you. For those who did not, I hope you will do so now.

In addition, this year we are asking all users of Stanford’s non-potable irrigation water to strive to reduce water use by 25 percent below 2013 same-month levels. The drought has drastically reduced Stanford’s surface water supplies and has resulted in the need to use more groundwater in our non-potable irrigation water system. Although not required to do so by the state, many campus irrigators have already begun reduction and efficiency projects, including R&E, Grounds, the Golf Course and DAPER. I am grateful for their efforts and confident we can significantly reduce irrigation water use without sacrificing the high quality of the university’s sports and recreation facilities and fields.

As way of background, the State Water Resources Control Board adopted emergency water conservation regulations that went into effect on May 18. The new regulations require
institutional water users like Stanford to either reduce potable water use by 25 percent compared to the same months in 2013 or limit irrigation with potable water on ornamental landscapes and turf to two days per week. These regulations prohibit or restrict certain potable—meaning drinkable—water uses, and, as you see, they are very similar to last year:

1. The application of potable water to landscapes in a manner that causes runoff to adjacent property, non-irrigated areas, private and public walkways, roadways, parking lots or structures.
2. The use of a hose that dispenses potable water to wash a motor vehicle, unless the hose is fitted with a shut-off nozzle.
3. The application of potable water to any hard surface, including, but not limited to, driveways, sidewalks, and asphalt.
4. The use of potable water in a fountain or decorative water feature, unless the water is recirculated.
5. The application of potable water to outdoor landscapes during and within 48 hours after measurable rainfall.
6. Serving drinking water other than upon request by an eating or drinking establishment.
7. The irrigation with potable water of ornamental turf on public street medians.
8. The irrigation with potable water of landscapes outside newly constructed homes and buildings.

Commendable achievements have been made by Stanford’s water conservation efforts since 2000. Water conservation programs have reduced university potable water use by about 20 percent. The Stanford Energy System Innovations project, which went online in April, is further reducing potable water use another 15 percent. In addition, from February to October of last year, water conservation measures resulted in a 4.5 percent reduction in domestic water use and
an 18 percent reduction in non-potable use. All the water conservation measures that were implemented or expanded in 2014 will continue in 2015.

That said, the California drought is significant and serious. So I ask for your help in complying with the measures above. Please also pursue any other practical forms of water conservation available to you, including reporting and quickly fixing leaks and further reducing irrigation and indoor use as much as possible. Call the LBRE facilities customer service center at 723-2281 to report any water leaks, excessive runoff from over-irrigation and to suggest other possible opportunities for water conservation. For any further information or questions you may contact Tom Zigterman (Director, Water Resources & Civil Infrastructure): twz@stanford.edu or 650-725-3400.

As always, thanks so much for all your efforts.

Sincerely,

John Etchemendy