



People living in Metro Vancouver could be faced with Stage 1 water restrictions — which limit lawn sprinkler use to three days a week — from May 15 to Oct. 15 next year.

WATER

Metro hopes stemming sprinkler flow prevents harsher measures

Region staff propose extending limits on lawn care by a month

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VANCOUVER SUN

Metro Vancouver residents will likely face water restrictions two weeks earlier next summer in a bid to prevent a repeat of the near-drought conditions experienced at local reservoirs this year.

A Metro staff report suggests amending its water use plans to invoke Stage 1 water restrictions, which limit lawn sprinkling to three days a week, from May 15 to Oct. 15 — a month longer than the usual summer restrictions that usually run from June 1 to Sept. 30.

The move, which will go to the utilities committee Thursday, is expected to help the regional district control demand and avoid Stage 3 restrictions — which prohibit lawn sprinkling — should similar weather patterns persist next year.

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DARRELL MUSSATTO
MAYOR OF NORTH VANCOUVER AND
CHAIR OF THE METRO VANCOUVER
UTILITIES COMMISSION

City and chair of Metro's utilities committee. "What we want to do is eliminate the need to go to phase three if we can help it because you have businesses affected."

Metro Vancouver announced Stage 3 restrictions by early June this year, following a hot, dry spring and summer and limited snowpack, which saw water use rise to about 33.5 billion litres in May — about 15 per cent more than the same time a year earlier. The staff report suggests the move posed a hardship for

companies that need water to run their businesses and will be reviewed along with lawn-watering exemption permits issued to residents and businesses affected by the European chafer beetle.

The amended water restrictions are part of an overall technical review of the water response plan, which is expected to start this month and run until April 2017. The review, which will involve public consultation, will look at the scope of the reductions, such as restricting lawn sprinkling to one day per week, and consider other water-use practices and water-saving technologies.

Mussatto noted the regional district is moving ahead with the amended water restrictions because municipalities need notice to update their calendars for residents.

"We're hoping next year we will get back to the more traditional pattern with more precipitation in May and June and take some of the demand off," he said.

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Note that the reservoir levels never got below 50% of capacity before the rains came and the water shortage disappeared. 70% of annual flow of water into our reservoirs is dumped straight into the ocean because our storage capacity has not improved in 50 years, while our population has mushroomed. The immense cost of property damage caused by water restrictions has just been swept under the rug. Time to address the cost/benefit of this renewable resource. -cj