

AB 1572

Nonfunctional Turf Irrigation Ban

LOMMA Meeting
November 3, 2025

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AB 1572: Purpose

- California faces persistent drought and climate change impacts on water supplies.
- Potable water use for nonfunctional turf is considered wasteful and unsustainable.

AB 1572 Requirements

- Prohibits **irrigating** nonfunctional turf (NFT) on commercial, industrial, institutional (CII) properties, and **HOA common areas.**
- HOAs must stop irrigating NFT no later than **January 1, 2029.**
- HOAs with >5,000 sq. ft. of irrigated **area** must certify compliance to the State beginning in 2031.

Enforcement

- By January 1, 2027, the City of Santa Rosa will update city code to address AB 1572 compliance.
- Enforcement methods are yet to be determined. May include notices with directives or other penalties.
- The State Water Resources Control Board may also take enforcement action if needed - up to \$1,000 per day.

What is Turf?

- Ground cover of mowed grass that is maintained in a green condition.

Examples

- Cool-season grasses: Kentucky bluegrass and tall fescue
- Warm-season grasses: bermudagrass.

Note: Artificial turf is not included in this definition and is not subject to AB 1572 requirements.

What is Nonfunctional Turf?

- Nonfunctional turf refers to an irrigated lawn that is purely decorative and not regularly used for recreation or public/community gatherings.

“If the only time you walk on the turf is to mow it, it is considered nonfunctional.”

Nonfunctional Turf Indicators

Does the landscape have any of the following?

- Narrow strips (10 ft wide or less) along sidewalks, fences, or buildings
- Medians, frontage strips, or parking lot islands
- Decorative lawns at subdivision entries, signage areas, or gateways
- Steep slopes (25% grade or more)
- Inaccessible lawns (blocked by barriers, no pathways)
- Purely ornamental lawn (green for looks only, not used by residents)

If “**Yes**” then it’s likely Nonfunctional and subject to AB 1572.

What is NFT?



Taking an NFT Inventory

Step 1:

- Obtain landscape design & irrigation as-builts

Step 2:

- Visual inspections
- Compare areas to the HOA NFT Guide available at: www.NonFunctionalTurfCA.org

Step 3:

- Apply measuring tools
 - Field measurements
 - Online aerial imagery measuring tool: <https://nonfunctionalturfca.org/agency/>



HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATIONS

LESS LAWN MORE COMMUNITY

HOA Guide for Identifying Nonfunctional Lawn Under AB 1572

Goal: By January 1, 2029, Homeowners Associations (HOAs) must stop using potable (drinking) water to irrigate nonfunctional lawn in common areas that are purely decorative. This guide helps HOA boards, property managers, and landscape committees determine whether a lawn area requires action.

California Flannel Bush (Fremontodendron spp., California native)

STEP 1 – EXEMPTION CHECK

Question: Is this lawn irrigated with recycled or non-potable water, or is it located on an individual homeowner's private lot?

YES: *NO ACTION NEEDED (Exempt)*

- Recycled water irrigation (purple pipe, "Do Not Drink" signs)
- Turf on private residential property (front or back yards maintained by the homeowner)

NO: *Continue to Step 2* 

STEP 2 – USE CHECK

Question: Is the lawn regularly used for recreation or community gatherings?

YES: *NO ACTION NEEDED (Functional Lawn)*

- Sport fields
- Event or gathering lawns (barbecues, festivals, HOA meetings, or social spaces)
- Pet play or relief areas
- Playground lawns integrated with play equipment
- Required for stormwater management or flood control

NO: *Continue to Step 3* 

HOA FUNCTIONAL AND NON-FUNCTIONAL TURF INVENTORY CHECKLIST

Date of Assessment:

Location:

Assessor Name:

Area	Zone	Type
Pool area	1	FT: Active / Programmed Recreation Turf (e.g., playgrounds, sports fields, designated recreational areas)
West side	8	FT: Athletic Field & Playground Turf (regularly used for organized sports or play)
Club house	8	FT: Designated Pet Relief Area (clearly marked and actively used)
Fitness center area	10	FT: Native Grass: Pollinator Habitat & Biodiversity Consideration (integrated with native plants, supports ecological functions)
East Trail	12	FT: Turfgrass Directly Beneath Tree Canopies (protecting roots and providing shade)
East sidewalks	14	NFT: Turfgrass with any single dimension of 8 feet or less (e.g., narrow strips)
North sidewalks	16	NFT: Turf exceeding a 25% slope
Dumpsters	4	NFT: Turf in areas not accessible by paved pathways or restricted by physical barriers
Event Center	2	NFT: Adjacent to and within all parking lots
Entry Roadways	9	NFT: Turf located in the public right of way, including center medians, roundabouts, streetscapes (between sidewalk and street)
West Entrance	18	NFT: Turf located at HOA entries/exits
BBQ Area	22	NFT: Turf with non-conforming dimensions (inefficient to irrigate)
Visitor Center	27	NFT: Interior/courtyard turf (not used for recreation)

Example Inventory

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How Are HOAs Impacted?

Single Family Residential Front Lawns

- General consensus amongst CA water suppliers is front lawns are not the target of AB 1572.
- However, the State regulatory authority, State Water Resources Control Board, must be the entity to provide clarification to HOAs.

Common Areas

- AB 1572 prohibits irrigation of NFT within HOA common areas that are not utilized for recreation or community gathering purposes.
- This includes lawn in parkway strips, around signage, around buildings, along slopes with >25% grade.



Trees

- NFT around trees is still NFT.
- However, irrigation can continue to preserve the health of trees and other perennial plantings.
 - This is water applied to the tree's root zone.
- Best Practice: New trees should be placed on their own irrigation valve separate from lawn.





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How Can the City Support Compliance?

Outdoor Rebates



Cash for Grass Rebate

Low-water landscapes can be vibrant, beautiful gardens! We can help offset some of the costs of your new garden with our rebate program, \$1/sq ft of lawn removed!

Rebate: \$1/sq. ft. lawn removed

Residential: \$1,000 lifetime cap

Commercial: \$10,000 annually

watersmart@srcity.org

(707) 543-3985

www.srcity.org/watersmart

Outdoor Rebates



Irrigation Efficiency Rebate

Is your controller from the 1980s? Have you been thinking of converting your spray system to drip irrigation? You may be eligible for a rebate.

****Cannot be combined with Cash for Grass for same project***

Residential: \$300 lifetime cap

Commercial: \$1,000 lifetime cap/meter

watersmart@srcity.org

(707) 543-3985

www.srcity.org/watersmart



Understanding Your Irrigation System

Garden irrigation can seem intimidating, but with the right resources, it doesn't have to be.



Garden Design and Plant Selection

Let us help you design your new WaterSmart garden.

Watering Recommendations

Free weekly watering recommendations for your garden.



Maintaining a WaterSmart Garden

Just like any garden, low-water-use landscapes also require a little care and attention.

HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATIONS

LESS LAWN MORE APPEAL

The New State Law On Irrigating Nonfunctional Lawn

Starting on **January 1, 2029**, California law (AB 1572) will prohibit the use of potable (drinking) water to irrigate nonfunctional lawns in Homeowner Association (HOA) common areas that are purely decorative. HOAs are not required to transform these areas into water-wise landscapes by that date, but lawns can no longer be irrigated using potable water.

Failure to comply with the law can result in civil penalties of up to \$1,000 per day (California Water Code §1846).

The new law provides an opportunity to create attractive, vibrant spaces that showcase the beauty of low-water and native plants, increase curb appeal, and provide a vision for others to follow.

Steps for Getting Started



California Flannel Bush *Fremontodendron spp.*, California native

LESS LAWN. MORE SOLUTIONS.



AB 1572 VIRTUAL LUNCH & LEARN - NOV. 13TH

LEARN HOW THE NONFUNCTIONAL TURF IRRIGATION BAN IMPACTS YOU!



DATE

November 13, 2025



WEBINAR

Virtual



TIME

12 PM - 1 PM PST

WHAT WE WILL COVER:

- What counts as non-functional turf under AB 1572 (with clear visuals & examples)
- Timelines & requirements – what's changing, and when you need to act
- How to create a replacement plan that works for your property and your budget
- How to find available rebates and incentives to offset costs
- How to turn a mandate into an opportunity for beauty, shade, pollinators, and lower bills!

<https://calwep.org/event/less-lawn-more-solutions/>

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Listening Session Q&A