LESS LAWN MORE SAVINGS

Fact Sheet: New Rules, New Opportunities for Commercial, Industrial, and Institutional Properties

California law (AB 1572) will soon prohibit the use of potable (drinking) water to irrigate nonfunctional turf—lawns that serve no recreational or community purpose—at most commercial, industrial, and institutional (CII) properties.

These new rules create a unique opportunity for property owners and managers to transform their lawns into water-wise landscapes—reducing maintenance costs and shrinking water bills, all while demonstrating leadership and staying ahead of the regulatory curve.

California Lilac *Ceanothus spp., California native*

This fact sheet explains what's changing and how to prepare.

Functional Lawn

Nonfunctional Lawn

WHAT IS NONFUNCTIONAL LAWN?

Nonfunctional lawn refers to irrigated lawn that is purely ornamental and not regularly used for recreation or public gatherings. If the landscaper is the only person who ever walks on the lawn, it's likely nonfunctional.

Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Narrow lawn strips in or around parking lots
- Decorative lawn along sidewalks, building edges, or fences
- Lawn between buildings with no seating, access, or activity
- Lawn in medians, roundabouts, or entry signage zones
- Sloped or oddly shaped areas that are hard to use or water efficiently

BY JANUARY 1, 2028:

CII properties must stop watering nonfunctional lawns with potable water.

WHAT HAPPENS IF YOU DON'T COMPLY?

Failure to comply with AB 1572's nonfunctional lawn irrigation restrictions can result in civil penalties of up to $,1000 per day (California Water Code §1846). Enforcement specifics may vary by water agency; please contact your local provider for details.

AB 1572 applies to nonfunctional lawns on commercial, industrial, and institutional properties, including, but not limited to:

- Banking institutions
- Educational institutions
- Gas stations
- Grocery and retail stores
- Hospitals
- Office buildings
- Warehouses
- Religious institutions
- Strip malls
- Restaurants
- Fast food establishments
- Gyms

Photo by Laurie Meyerpeter

Photo by Santa Barbara Association of Realtors

Photo by Christine Kohn

Ideas for a Beautiful, Water-Wise Landscape

Many properties are using this transition to create colorful, water-wise areas that enhance the aesthetic of their properties and use less water. Ideas include:

- Native and low-water plants with seasonal color
- Shade trees and flowering shrubs
- Paths, benches, and gathering areas
- Rain gardens, bioswales, and dry stream beds

More CA friendly plant ideas at calscape.org

REAL PROPERTIES, REAL RESULTS

Businesses and properties of all sizes — from small storefronts to large campuses — across California are already seeing real savings after transforming their lawns into water-wise landscapes.

Photo by Westfield Galleria

Westfield Galleria in Roseville replaced the lawn around the shopping center, roughly the size of three football fields, to create a stunning water-wise landscape.

- Over 150,000 sq. ft. of lawn transformed
- Saves an estimated 8 million gallons of water per year

Photo by St. Anthony Parish Church

St. Anthony Parish Church in Sacramento transformed its underutilized lawn into a water-wise landscape - significantly reducing water use, lowering maintenance costs, and creating a more inviting and sustainable outdoor space for its congregation.

- 3,700 sq. ft. of lawn transformed

YOUR WATER PROVIDER IS HERE TO HELP

Many water agencies offer:

- Lawn replacement and irrigation rebates
- Free site visits and landscape reviews
- Sample plant lists and design templates
- Tree protection tips and irrigation strategies

CALIFORNIA WATER EFFICIENCY PARTNERSHIP

NonFunctionalTurfCA.org