

City limits now limit SAWS rules

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**By Jerry Needham
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Customers of the San Antonio Water System who live outside the city limits soon may have to live with the same drought rules as those in the city.

The utility's board next week is scheduled to vote on a resolution asking the City Council on June 19 to extend the city's water conservation ordinance to San Antonio's extraterritorial jurisdiction, which reaches into unincorporated areas five miles outside the city limits.

That was made possible by a change in state law last year.

"This would codify what most people thought was already true - that we're all in this together, we all share this resource, we want to manage it well," said Karen Guz, SAWS conservation director.

"Fortunately, most of our customers, regardless of whether they happen to live inside or outside the city limits, have generally perceived that they shouldn't waste water and that during drought we're all in this together," she said.

But extending the ordinance would give the utility the ability to cite those who refuse to comply with rules such as the one that prohibits sprinkling year-round between 10 a.m. and 8 p.m., she said.

Those outside the city limits already are able to take advantage of the utility's rebate programs designed to increase conservation, she said.

The change also would extend some consumer protection benefits to out-of-city customers, Guz added.

Those include city requirements for at least four inches of soil under lawns at new homes and standards for installation of irrigation systems, she said.

"It's very frustrating to a homeowner to find that they have grass growing on top of rock and they're trying to maintain that," Guz said.

Online at:

http://www.mysanantonio.com/news/environment/stories/MYSA052708.3B.drought_rules_etj.EN.3898bdd.html

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