

From: [Katja Irvin](#)
To: [Nai Hsueh](#); [Richard Santos](#); [Shiloh Ballard](#)
Cc: [Stephanie Simunic](#); layne.fajeau@sierraclub.org; [Mark Shahinian](#)
Subject: March 23, 2023 WSDMC Sierra Club public comment (not on agenda)
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Attachments: [032326 public comment follow-up on demand modeling Sierra Club.pdf](#)

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Chair Hsueh and WSDMC Committee,

The Sierra Club wants to thank this committee and Valley Water staff for taking time to meet with us regarding demand modeling for the 2025 Urban Water Management Plan. We wanted to follow up with the Committee about what we learned from staff and what we still want to understand better.

Please read the attached comment to the Committee meant for today's public comment period.

Best regards,
Katja Irvin

March 23, 2026 Water Supply and Demand Management Committee Meeting

Katja Irvin public comment, follow up on demand forecasting discussion, not on the agenda

Good morning, Chair Hsueh and committee members.

I wanted to let you know that the Sierra Club was able to meet with the Valley Water water supply planning team regarding water demand projections and Valley Water's demand forecasting model. We learned more about the data and assumptions used to run the model, and we were impressed by the comprehensiveness of the model and the expertise and professionalism of Valley Water's water supply planning team. We appreciate staff taking time to meet with us.

There is one main thing we still don't understand – how the model shows a steep increase in water demand from 280 TAF in 2024 to 330 TAF in 2030. Staff pointed us to a drought effect calculation in section 5.2.9 of the Water Supply Master Plan Appendix D, which is a report on the Demand Model Development. This section talks about drought rebound. In reading Section 5.2.9, we could not find any clear explanation of the 2024 to 2030 steep drought rebound. Figure 5-5 in that section shows a 50% drought rebound from 2020 to 2025, which was after the 2013-2017 drought, with no further rebound after 2025. Granted, this report was completed in 2021, so the modeling is out of date, but no similar graph was provided to explain the WSMP model runs.

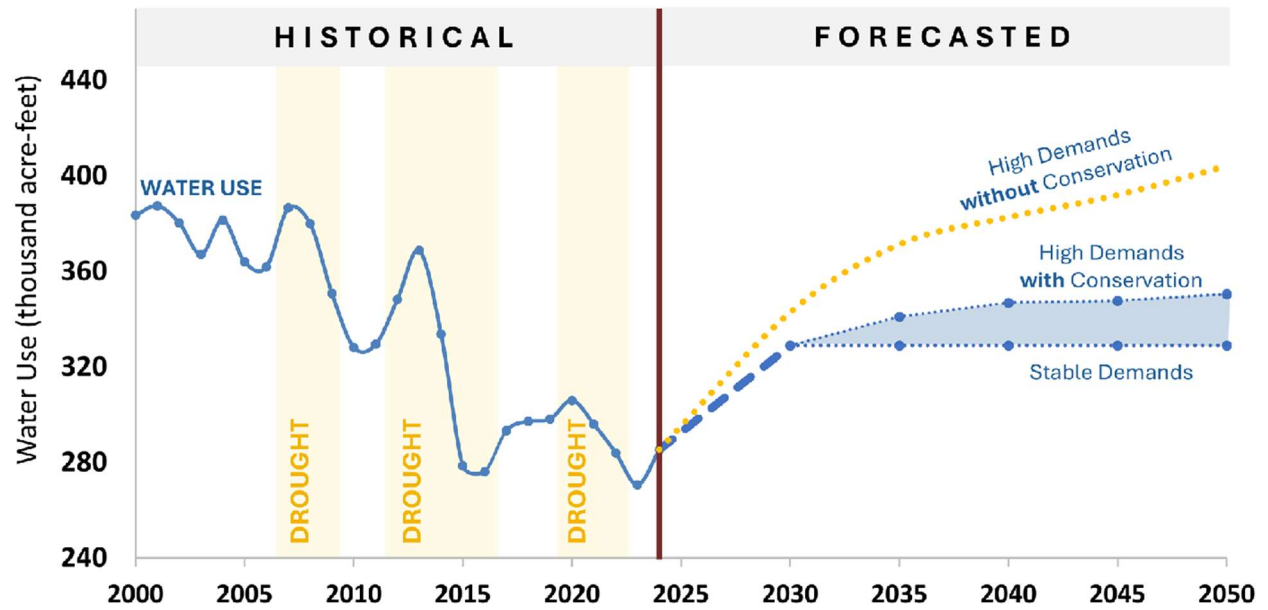
In contrast to the 2020 model runs, the WSMP 2050 forecasted over 100% rebound from the 2020 to 2023 drought. Demand decreased by 38,700 acre-feet during that drought while the WSMP forecasts a rebound of 59,500 acre-feet by 2030. Demand in Santa Clara County has not been at 330 TAF since 2014 and we still do not see a realistic path back to this level of demand on a stable basis. 2025 countywide water usage was approximately 285,000 acre-feet, up only slightly from 2024 usage of 282,800 acre-feet. This indicates a muted rebound that does not support the WSMP model results for a steep rebound through 2030.

With these questions in mind, we will continue trying to understand Valley Water's model in general and the steep demand increase through 2030 in particular. We hope to have the opportunity to examine the actual calculations in the model that support the demand projections in the 2050 WSMP, which will also be used for the 2025 Urban Water Management Plan.

Lastly, we encourage Valley Water to consider a wider range of demand scenarios in the UWMP to aid in planning for other possible water usage outcomes. Even the WSMP stable demand scenario holds demand at 330,000 acre-feet through 2050. The Sierra Club model shows demand down to 225,000 acre-feet given the trends in droughts and conservation. We are not recommending our model, but we think it would be prudent to run your model with different assumptions and inputs that are based on historical water demand and climate change trends.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments. I will send this to you shortly for your reference.

Figure 3-4 Historical and Forecasted Water Demands



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