



# DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND BUILDING

Promoting the wise use of land – Helping to build great communities

## Water Neutral New Development in the Paso Robles Groundwater Basin

In response to ongoing water scarcity concerns, on October 27, 2015 the Board of Supervisors adopted Water Neutral New Development requirements for the Paso Robles Groundwater Basin. All new buildings must offset projected water use at a 1:1 ratio and install meters on wells serving the new use. You will need to obtain an offset clearance and a well meter inspection for your proposed project prior to permit issuance.

### Obtain Offset Clearance

You may choose to obtain offset clearance in one of two ways:

1. Purchase offset credits through a County-run Water Conservation Program

The County operates two programs in the Paso Robles Groundwater Basin to generate water savings. The Plumbing Retrofit Program replaces older plumbing fixtures with high efficiency fixtures in homes. The Cash for Grass Program provides incentives for property owners to replace turf with water efficient landscaping. New development applicants can pay for these programs in order to save the amount of water that their new building will use. The cost of water offset credits equals the cost of performing retrofits and operating the Cash for Grass program.

The table below shows the standard gallons per day and corresponding cost of offset credits for a new single family dwelling, secondary unit, guest house, and an addition.

| Dwelling Type           | Gallons per Day   | Cost    |
|-------------------------|---|---------|
| Single Family Dwelling* | 300   | \$4,854 |
| Secondary*              | 150   | \$2,427 |
| Guest House*            | 50  | \$809   |
| Addition                | No offset required. Building Code requires that all existing fixtures in the home be water efficient. |         |
| Replacement             | No offset required. Building Code requires that all existing fixtures in the home be water efficient. |         |

\* A well meter inspection fee of \$375 is also required.

The standard use amount for a new single family dwelling is based on an average of indoor and outdoor water use estimates from water provider data in the Paso Robles Groundwater Basin. To maintain consistency with assumptions of the Paso Robles Groundwater Basin Model Update (2014), some indoor water use is assumed to recharge

the basin through onsite septic systems. Outdoor water use accounts for the majority of residential water use in the Paso Robles Groundwater Basin and is assumed mostly consumed or lost to evapotranspiration. Outdoor water use of new residential dwelling units is assumed to be slightly less than the current estimated outdoor water use due to proposed new landscaping requirements and increasing interest in water conservation. All proposed landscaping must comply with applicable county codes.

The standard offset amounts shall apply unless specific and adequate evidence, as determined by the Director of Planning and Building, is submitted during the building permit application process indicating that some other offset amount is more appropriate (e.g., use of greywater system).

OR

2. Hire a licensed plumber to perform retrofits in the Paso Robles Groundwater Basin

You may choose to offset water use by hiring your own licensed plumber directly to perform retrofits in the Paso Robles Groundwater Basin. Replacement fixtures must be the same or higher performing as the fixtures provided through the County's program. You must provide verifiable evidence and applicable forms. In addition, the County's licensed plumber will perform an inspection on 30% the retrofitted homes. An inspection fee of \$133 per inspection will be due prior to building permit issuance. Please contact the Planning and Building department to obtain detailed requirements, savings calculation methods, and forms prior to beginning retrofits.

### **Well Metering and Monitoring**

Meters are required for new wells or for existing wells serving new development in the Paso Robles Groundwater Basin. Proof an inspection conducted by the Department of Public Works for the well meter must be submitted prior to building permit issuance.

The well meter inspection fee is \$375.

Property owners or a person designated by the property owner must read the water meter and record the data on or near the first day of the month. These records must be maintained by the property owner, but do not need to be submitted to the County.

If you have any questions, please contact us at 805-781-1366 or [c Cochran@co.slo.ca.us](mailto:c Cochran@co.slo.ca.us). Information is also available online at [www.pasobasin.org](http://www.pasobasin.org).