

California Bill Defining 'Water Feature' Passes Senate

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A California bill that directs local public agencies to analyze and define "water feature" separately from swimming pools and spas passed the Senate late June and now awaits the governor's signature.

Specifically, Assembly Bill 2409, co-authored by assemblyman Brian Nestande (R-Riverside) and assemblyman Jerry Hill (D-San Mateo), revises the Urban Water Management Planning Act to direct cities and counties in urban water management, for purposes of developing a water shortage contingency analysis, to analyze and define "water features" that are artificially supplied with water, including fountains, ponds, lakes and waterfalls, separately from swimming pools and spas.

Assembly Bill 2409 would commence with the urban water management plan update due on Dec. 31, 2015. In addition, each urban water supplier would need to update its plan at least once every 5 years on or before Dec 31, in years ending in five and zero.

Assembly Bill 2409, which is sponsored by the California Spa and Pool Industry Education Council (SPEC), was introduced in February to ensure that agencies treat swimming pools and spas differently than decorative water features. The main concern, according to John Norwood, president of SPEC, is that the all-inclusive definition could lead to swimming pools and spas being ordered to shut down in certain emergency situations, if adopted by local agencies for drought ordinances. This, in turn, could cause damage to homeowners' pools and spas, Norwood said.

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