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**AB-2515 Water Conservation in Landscaping Act: model water-efficient landscaping ordinance.** (2015-2016)

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**Assembly Bill No. 2515**

**CHAPTER 576**

An act to add Section 65596.5 to the Government Code, relating to water-efficient landscaping.

[ Approved by Governor September 24, 2016. Filed with Secretary of State September 24, 2016. ]

**LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST**

AB 2515, Weber. Water Conservation in Landscaping Act: model water-efficient landscaping ordinance.

Existing law, the Water Conservation in Landscaping Act, requires the Department of Water Resources to update its model water-efficient landscape ordinance by regulation and prescribes various requirements for the updated model ordinance.

This bill would require the department, on or before January 1, 2020, and every three years thereafter, to either update the model water-efficient landscaping ordinance or make a finding that an update to the model water-efficient landscaping ordinance at that time is not a useful or effective means to improve either the efficiency of landscape water use or the administration of the ordinance. The bill would additionally require the department to submit the update to the Building Standards Commission during the triennial update process of the California Green Building Standards Code.

Vote: majority Appropriation: no Fiscal Committee: yes Local Program: no

**THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:**

**SECTION 1.** The Legislature finds and declares all of the following:

- (a) California is experiencing a prolonged and significant drought that is unprecedented in California's recorded history.
- (b) Communities throughout the state have been directed to curtail water use. Residential, commercial, industrial, and institutional users have all worked to reduce water consumption.
- (c) Prior to the extraordinary water use reductions implemented during the drought emergency, approximately one-half of the urban water provided for all purposes in California was used outdoors, primarily for landscape irrigation. This significant amount of potable water, approximately four million acre-feet per year, illuminates the critical importance of landscape water use efficiency.
- (d) Functional and attractive landscapes are essential to Californians' quality of life, providing places to recreate and relax, cooling the environment around buildings, offering wildlife habitat, and creating places of beauty.
- (e) Updates to the model water-efficient landscape ordinance can help to advance landscaping and irrigation practices and policies that will make landscape water use far more sustainable than it is today.

(f) Synchronizing updates to the model water-efficient landscape ordinance with the triennial cycle for revisions to the California Green Building Standards Code would also ensure that landscape professionals, plumbing professionals, and local governments are able to integrate advancements and improvements in landscape and irrigation technologies, systems, and practices into the body of rules that govern installation, rehabilitation, overhaul, and updates of outdoor landscapes to significantly advance California's strong water use efficiency ethic.

**SEC. 2.** Section 65596.5 is added to the Government Code, to read:

**65596.5.** (a) On or before January 1, 2020, and at least every three years thereafter, the department, after holding one or more public hearings, shall do one of the following:

(1) Update the model water-efficient landscape ordinance adopted pursuant to Chapter 1145 of the Statutes of 1990.

(2) Make a finding that an update to the model water-efficient landscape ordinance at that time is not a useful or effective means to improve either the efficiency of landscape water use or the administration of the ordinance.

(b) When the model water-efficient landscape ordinance has been updated, the department shall submit the update to the Building Standards Commission for consideration during the triennial revision process of the California Green Building Standards Code.