LESS LAWN MORE COMMUNITY



California Flannel Bush *Fremontodendron spp., California native*

HOA Guide for Identifying Nonfunctional Lawn Under AB 1572

Goal: By January 1, 2029, Homeowners Associations (HOAs) must stop using potable (drinking) water to irrigate nonfunctional lawn in common areas that are purely decorative. This guide helps HOA boards, property managers, and landscape committees determine whether a lawn area requires action.

STEP 1 — EXEMPTION CHECK

Question: Is this lawn irrigated with recycled or non-potable water, or is it located on an individual homeowner's private lot?

YES: ***NO ACTION NEEDED (Exempt)***

- Recycled water irrigation (purple pipe, "Do Not Drink" signs)
- Turf on private residential property (front or back yards maintained by the homeowner)

NO: ***Continue to Step 2*** ⬇

STEP 2 — USE CHECK

Question: Is the lawn regularly used for recreation or community gatherings?

YES: ***NO ACTION NEEDED (Functional Lawn)***

- Sport fields
- Event or gathering lawns (barbecues, festivals, HOA meetings, or social spaces)
- Pet exercise areas
- Playground lawns integrated with play equipment
- Required for stormwater management or flood control

NO: ***Continue to Step 3*** ⬇

STEP 3 — NONFUNCTIONAL INDICATORS

Question: Does the lawn fit any of these categories?

- Narrow strips (10 ft wide or less) along sidewalks, fences, or buildings
- Medians, frontage strips, or parking lot islands
- Decorative lawns at subdivision entries, signage areas, or gateways
- Steep slopes (25% grade or more)
- Inaccessible lawns (blocked by barriers, no pathways)
- Purely ornamental lawn (green for looks only, not used by residents)

If **YES** to any of the above ***ACTION REQUIRED (Nonfunctional Lawn)***

If **NO** to all of the above, consider contacting water provider about irrigation system upgrades.

STEP 4 — TREE CONSIDERATION

Question: Are trees planted in the nonfunctional lawn?

YES: ***ACTION REQUIRED (Nonfunctional Lawn)***

- You must stop irrigating the lawn with potable water
- BUT you should continue to irrigate trees to protect their health. Check with your local water provider on the best ways to protect trees in nonfunctional lawn areas
- Consider converting sprinklers to more efficient system, such as drip irrigation or multi-stream, multi-trajectory nozzles

NO: ***ACTION REQUIRED (Nonfunctional Lawn)***

- You must stop irrigating the lawn with potable water

FINAL RESULTS

Every HOA lawn area ends up in one of two buckets:

NO ACTION NEEDED

- Functional Lawn (regularly used for recreation, pets, or community events)
- Exempt (recycled water irrigation, private homeowner lawns)

ACTION REQUIRED

- Nonfunctional Lawn (decorative, strips, medians, slopes, ornamental)
- Nonfunctional Lawn with Tree Exemption (stop watering grass; continue to protect and water trees)



Photo by Countrywood HOA

Review the HOA Flyer for steps on transitioning your areas of nonfunctional lawn into beautiful water-wise landscapes filled with low-water and native plants.

YOUR WATER PROVIDER IS HERE TO HELP

Many water agencies offer:

- Lawn replacement and irrigation rebates
- Free site visits and landscape reviews
- Sample plant lists and design templates
- Tree protection tips and irrigation strategies

CALIFORNIA WATER EFFICIENCY PARTNERSHIP

NonFunctionalTurfCA.org