



2025 – 2026 Drought Contingency Plan Amendment

- **Andrew Cummings, Interim Chief Customer Officer**

- January 28, 2026

CAP Report and Response to the Proposed Updates to the DCP

Kimberly M. Britton
Chief Executive Officer & Founder

BRITTON STRATEGIES





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CAP Review Process

- CAP Members participated in meetings focused on proposed DCP updates from September through November 2025.
- Early on, members completed a survey to assess perceptions of NBU's current drought management approach and the characteristics of an ideal approach.
- The five highest-rated priorities for the DCP were that it be:
 - ✓ Sustainable
 - ✓ Easy to understand
 - ✓ Forward-looking
 - ✓ Community-focused
 - ✓ Transparent

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CAP Review Process

- CAP members met in small virtual groups between October and November meetings to review the proposed updates, ask questions and discuss implications.
- In November, the CAP reconvened with NBU staff and consultants from Britton Strategies to synthesize feedback for the CAP's formal response.
- Conversation was robust and the CAP elected to meet again in December to discuss a revised final draft.
- Prior to the meeting, the Chairs, staff and consultants captured CAP input, which informed the final report and response formally adopted at the December meeting and which follows.

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CAP Report and Response to the Proposed Updates to the DCP

BRITTON STRATEGIES



After reviewing NBU's proposed updates to the Drought Contingency Plan (DCP) and related City of New Braunfels ordinance, we, the members of the Community Advisory Panel, respectfully submit the following observations and recommendations to the NBU Board of Trustees:

1. The CAP recommends the usage of clear and understandable language as NBU prepares to update the DCP, both in this interim step and in the more comprehensive update planned for 2029. It supports the current proposed updates to the DCP and its conservation guidance for customers.

3. We encourage NBU to continue modeling strong water stewardship practices that are for the best interests of New Braunfels and its future.



2. The CAP supports NBU's forward-looking approach of ensuring a diverse and adequate supply of water for decades to come. We believe this is a significant move toward protecting the quality of life and economic health of the region.

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After reviewing NBU's proposed updates to the Drought Contingency Plan (DCP) and related City of New Braunfels ordinance, we, the members of the Community Advisory Panel, respectfully submit the following observations and recommendations to the NBU Board of Trustees:

4. We commend NBU for shifting from a punitive model designed to minimize excess water use toward one that emphasizes personal responsibility and shared commitment to water stewardship.

5. We applaud NBU's proactive outreach to high-use customers to help them identify savings, manage usage and achieve measurable conservation outcomes.



6. The CAP recommends maintaining a water rate structure that appropriately sends a clear stewardship signal by charging more for discretionary irrigation use while continuing to protect essential household and business needs.

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After reviewing NBU's proposed updates to the Drought Contingency Plan (DCP) and related City of New Braunfels ordinance, we, the members of the Community Advisory Panel, respectfully submit the following observations and recommendations to the NBU Board of Trustees:



7. We appreciate NBU's intentionality to protect those using water for essential household and business needs. Approximately 73% of NBU customers will see no impact from the proposed changes.

8. We believe education of NBU customers on effective water conservation is an essential component for success. Customers should be able to see clearly how their actions correspond to their usage and what they pay.

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After reviewing NBU's proposed updates to the Drought Contingency Plan (DCP) and related City of New Braunfels ordinance, we, the members of the Community Advisory Panel, respectfully submit the following observations and recommendations to the NBU Board of Trustees:

Finally, the CAP extends its appreciation to NBU staff for their expertise, transparency and collaboration throughout this process.

We also commend the NBU Board of Trustees and leadership for their continued commitment to community engagement and thoughtful stewardship of this vital resource.



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Questions?

BRITTON STRATEGIES



Agenda

- **Drought History and Project Background**
- **Proposed Changes to the Drought Contingency Plan (DCP)**
 - Trigger Levels and Events
 - Drought Surcharge
 - Customer Response for Stages 0-5
 - Summary of Proposals
- **Next Steps**



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Drought History and Project Background

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DCP Project Intent and Deliverables

Project Intent

- Provide clear, easy-to-understand drought guidance for customers.
- Attempted alignment with neighboring entities for consistent messaging.
- Balance customer lifestyles with drought and empower voluntary conservation.
- Protect essential water users.
- Prepare for formal DCP revision in 2029

Deliverables

1. Revised Trigger Levels and Trigger Events
2. Updated Drought Surcharge
3. Updates to Customer Response for Drought Stages 0 - 5

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Drought History

Worst Droughts for Texas in Order of Severity

1. Drought of Record, 1950-1957

- Edwards Aquifer Lowest Level – 612'msl, August 1956
- Comal River ran dry – June-November 1956

1. 2020's Drought, 2019-Present

- Edwards Aquifer Lowest Level – 623'msl, May 2025
- Hottest year on record for Texas – 2023, +3.5°F over average

1. 2010's Drought, 2010-2015

- Edwards Aquifer Lowest Level – 625'msl, September 2014
- Driest year on record for Texas – 2011, 14.88" Texas average



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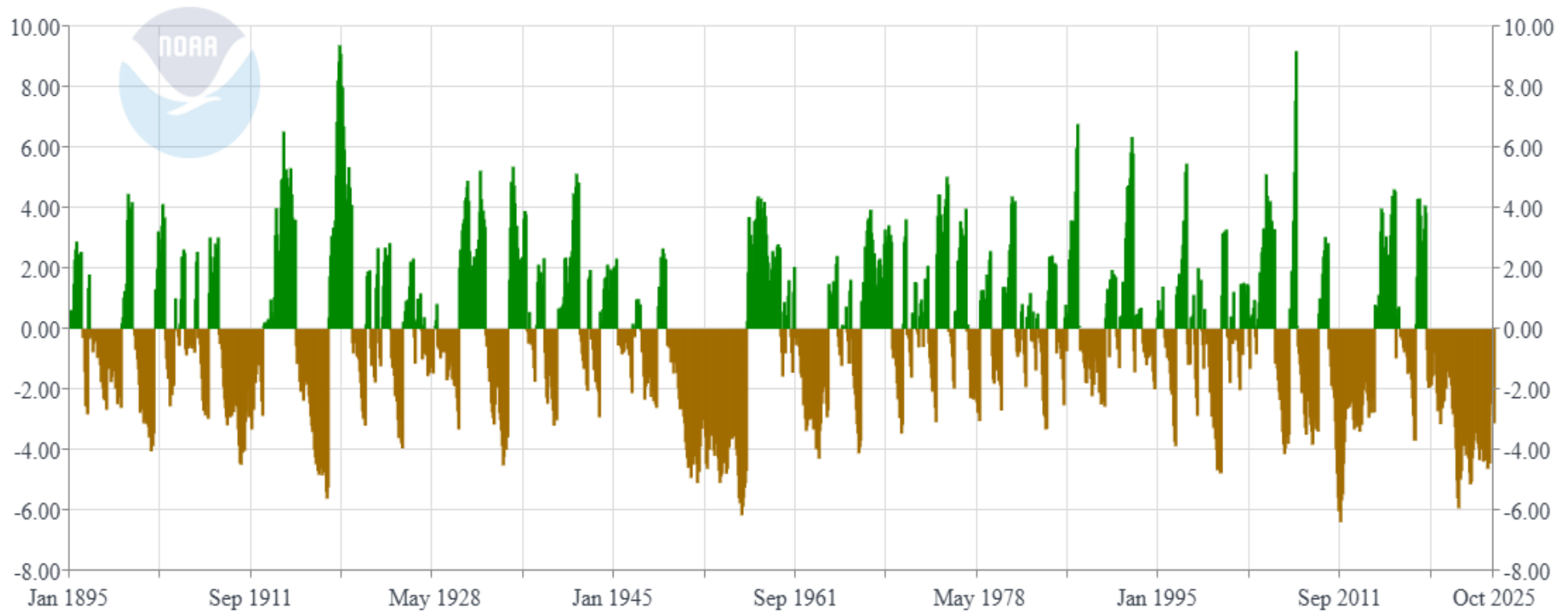
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Drought History – Visualized

Texas, Climate Division 6 Palmer Drought Severity Index (PDSI)



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Progress So Far

Date	Event
May 2024	Submitted Current DCP to State Agencies (Unchanged)
December 2024 – May 2025	Internal Working Group
August 2025	DCP Preview to NBU Board
September 2025 – December 2025	CAP Workshops
January 2025	NBU Board Presentation of Proposals

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Proposed Changes to the Drought Contingency Plan

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Trigger Levels and Events

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Trigger Levels and Events – Adding Stage 4 & 5

Proposed Language (Summarized) – **Green** Indicates Changes

Ordinance Sec. 130-167. - Sec. 130-224 "Trigger levels" for implementation and termination of water use reduction measures, stages 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 to meet reduction measures as NBU deems necessary to meet regulatory requirements.

Factor Considered	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4	Stage 5
Edwards Aquifer J17 Monitoring Well	660 msl	650 msl	640 msl	630 msl	625 msl
Comal River Spring Flow	225 cfs	200 cfs	150 cfs	100 cfs	45 cfs
NBU Reduction Targets	7%	9%	11%	13%	15%

Definitions

msl – feet above
mean sea level

cfs – cubic feet per
second

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Trigger Levels and Events – Expanding Flexibility

Proposed Language (Summarized) – **Green** Indicates Additions

Ordinance Sec. 130-226. Implementation of additional water use reduction measures , ("aquifer risk"). Additional considerations for implementation and termination of water use reduction measures, stages 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5.

- (a) **Drought Conditions:** Extra restrictions may be imposed during severe drought based on broader conditions, not just trigger levels.
- (b) **Water Quality:** If water quality is unsafe, mandatory reductions may be enforced with the mayor's approval.
- (c) **Water Supply Availability:** Supply levels and regional conditions may guide reduction measures.
- (d) **Infrastructure Issues:** Emergency restrictions may apply if infrastructure failures threaten supply.
- (e) **Other Considerations:** Additional restrictions may implemented at anytime due to general seasonal or weather concerns.

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Drought Surcharge

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Drought Surcharge Intent

- Maintain financial stability and protect long-term water supply planning during drought
- Reduce landscape water use while safeguarding essential indoor needs
- Send a clear, stage-based conservation pricing signal during declared drought conditions
- Reinvest excess revenues, *if any*, in conservation and affordability programs; automatically ends when drought conditions improve



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Drought Surcharge – First Update Since 2014

Proposed Language (Summarized) – **Green** Indicates Changes

Ordinance Sec. 130-167. - Water rates., (m) Residential and landscape irrigation drought surcharges.

- New surcharge matches rate tiers, discourages excess drought use, and protects essential needs.
- **Surcharge not applicable during Stages 0 - 2**

Current Structure (est. 2014)

Stage	Domestic	Irrigation	Surcharge
	Threshold	Threshold	
3	15,000	7,500	\$1.00
4	15,000	7,500	\$2.00
5	N/A	N/A	N/A

Proposed Structure (Raftelis, June 2025)

Stage	Domestic	Irrigation	Surcharge
	Threshold	Threshold	
3	12,000	6,000	\$4.18
4	12,000	6,000	\$4.89
5	6,000	1	\$4.89

Note: Essential Users Below 6,000 Gallons **Never Affected by Surcharge**

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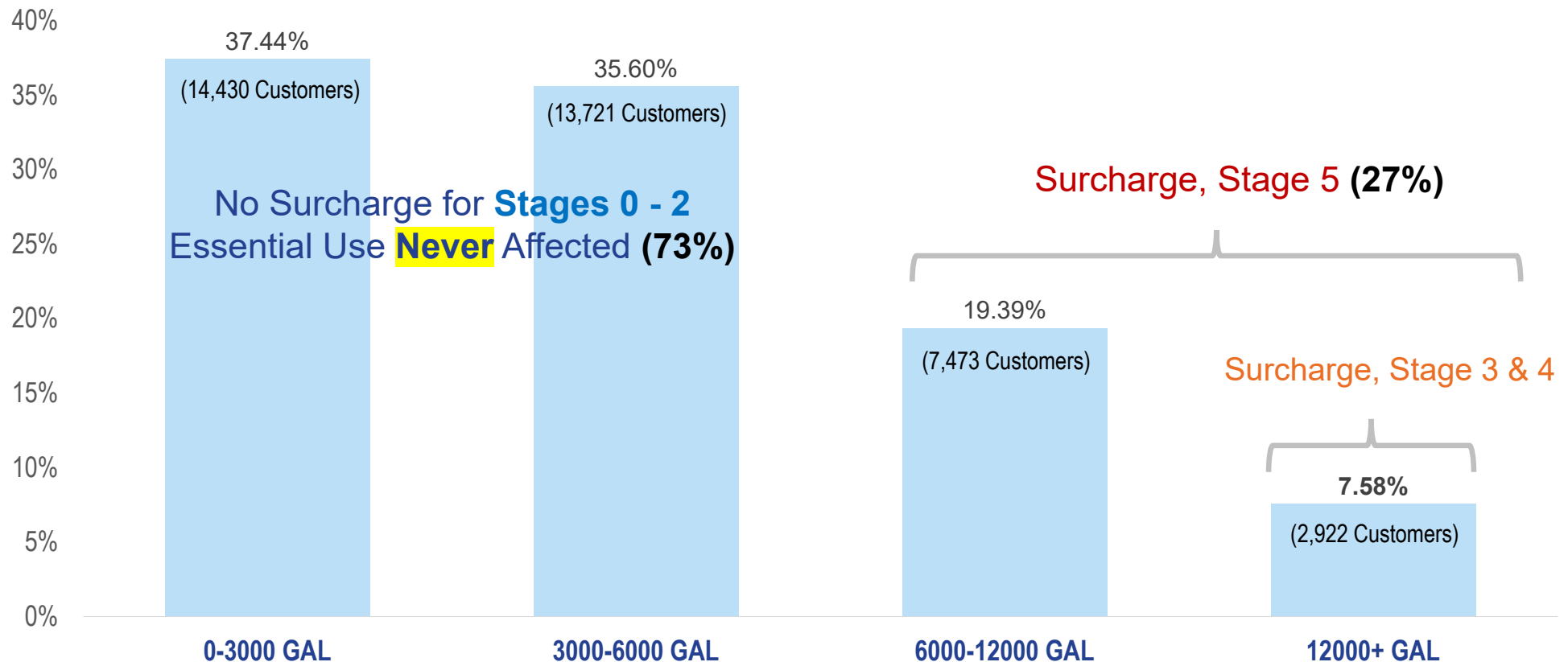
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Surcharge Structure – Residential Domestic

Domestic Usage Bracket Averages, Annual 2022-2024



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Surcharge Total Bill Impacts - Domestic

Stage	Water Usage	Bill w/o Surcharge	Bill w. Current Surcharge*	Bill w. Proposed Surcharge**	Increase \$	Increase %
0 - 2	No Applicable Surcharge					
3	15,000	\$156.84	\$156.84	\$169.53	\$12.69	8%
	20,000	\$236.29	\$241.29	\$270.13	\$28.84	12%
	25,000	\$315.74	\$325.74	\$370.73	\$44.99	14%
	30,000	\$395.19	\$410.19	\$471.33	\$61.14	15%
4	15,000	\$156.84	\$156.84	\$171.66	\$14.82	9%
	20,000	\$236.29	\$246.29	\$275.81	\$29.52	12%
	25,000	\$315.74	\$335.74	\$379.96	\$44.22	13%
	30,000	\$395.19	\$425.19	\$484.11	\$58.92	14%
5	15,000	\$156.84	\$156.84	\$201.30	\$44.46	28%
	20,000	\$236.29	\$246.29	\$305.45	\$59.16	24%
	25,000	\$315.74	\$335.74	\$409.60	\$73.86	22%
	30,000	\$395.19	\$425.19	\$513.75	\$88.56	21%

*Current surcharge usage thresholds begin at 15,000 gallons reflecting prior rate structure

**Proposed surcharge thresholds begin at 12,000 gallons for current rate alignment

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	20,000	\$236.29	\$241.29	\$270.13	\$28.84	12%
3	25,000	\$315.74	\$325.74	\$370.73	\$44.99	14%
	30,000	\$395.19	\$410.19	\$471.33	\$61.14	15%
4	15,000	Example. A high-use customer with an irrigation system behind a domestic meter (older system) will see a total bill increase of \$44.99 with the surcharge update in Stage 3.				9%
	20,000					12%
	25,000					13%
	30,000					14%
5	15,000	\$156.84	\$156.84	\$201.30	\$44.46	28%
	20,000	\$236.29	\$246.29	\$305.45	\$59.16	24%
	25,000	\$315.74	\$335.74	\$409.60	\$73.86	22%
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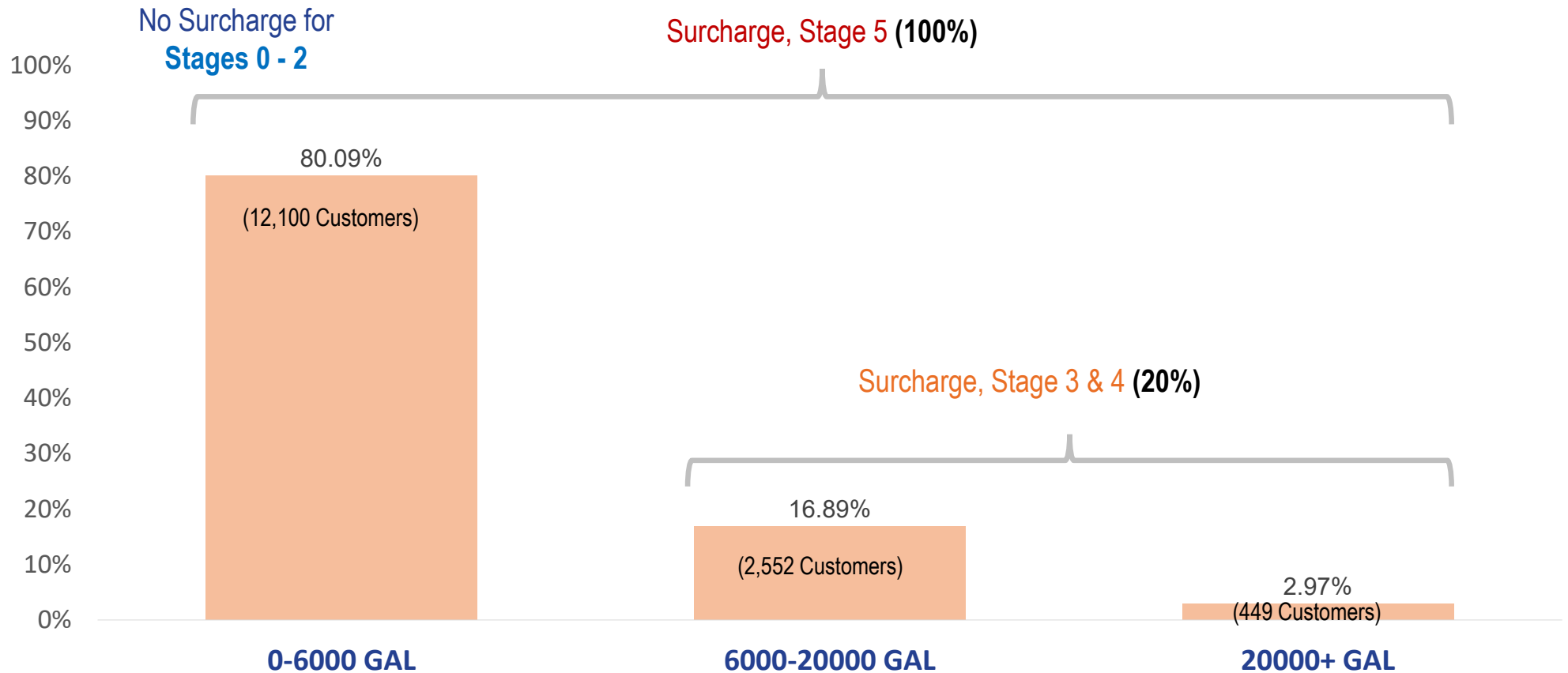
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Surcharge Structure – Residential Irrigation

Irrigation Usage Bracket Averages, Annual 2022-2024



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Stage	Water Usage	Bill w/o Surcharge	Bill w. Current Surcharge*	Bill w. Proposed Surcharge**	Increase \$	Increase %
0 - 2	No Applicable Surcharge					
3	15,000	\$194.22	\$201.72	\$232.29	\$30.57	15%
	20,000	\$255.82	\$268.32	\$315.04	\$46.72	17%
	25,000	\$341.07	\$358.57	\$421.44	\$62.87	18%
	30,000	\$426.32	\$448.82	\$527.84	\$79.02	18%
4	15,000	\$194.22	\$209.22	\$238.68	\$29.46	14%
	20,000	\$255.82	\$280.82	\$324.98	\$44.16	16%
	25,000	\$341.07	\$376.07	\$434.93	\$58.86	16%
	30,000	\$426.32	\$471.32	\$544.88	\$73.56	16%
5	15,000	\$194.22	\$209.22	\$268.22	\$59.00	28%
	20,000	\$255.82	\$280.82	\$354.62	\$73.80	26%
	25,000	\$341.07	\$376.07	\$464.57	\$88.50	24%
	30,000	\$426.32	\$471.32	\$574.52	\$103.20	22%

*Current surcharge usage thresholds begin at 7,500 gallons reflecting prior rate structure

**Proposed surcharge thresholds begin at 6,000 gallons for current rate alignment

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Surcharge Total Bill Impacts - Irrigation

Stage	Water Usage	Bill w/o Surcharge	Bill w. Current Surcharge*	Bill w. Proposed Surcharge**	Increase \$	Increase %
0 - 2	No Applicable Surcharge					
3	15,000	\$194.22	\$201.72	\$232.29	\$30.57	15%
	20,000	\$255.82	\$268.32	\$315.04	\$46.72	17%
	25,000	\$341.07	\$358.57	\$421.44	\$62.87	18%
	30,000	\$426.32	\$448.82	\$527.84	\$79.02	18%
4	15,000	Example. An extreme high-use irrigation customer will see a billing increase of \$73.56 with the updated Stage 4 surcharge.				14%
	20,000					16%
	25,000					16%
	30,000	\$426.32	\$471.32	\$544.88	\$73.56	16%
5	15,000	\$194.22	\$209.22	\$268.22	\$59.00	28%
	20,000	\$255.82	\$280.82	\$354.62	\$73.80	26%
	25,000	\$341.07	\$376.07	\$464.57	\$88.50	24%
	30,000	\$426.32	\$471.32	\$574.52	\$103.20	22%

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Surcharge – Key Takeaways

- Essential usage customers below 6,000 gallons **will never be impacted** by surcharge
- No applicable surcharge for **Stages 0 – 2**
- Moderate-high usage customers to see billing increase of +8-15% in **Stages 3 - 4**
- Extreme high-usage customers to see billing increase of ~+24% increase in **Stage 5** worst-case-scenario
- Surcharge revenues, **if any**, collected in excess of program needs will be directed to support NBU's conservation and utility billing assistance programs.

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Customer Response

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Current Status of Stage 3, 4, and 5

	Non-Drought	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4	Stage 5
 NBU NEW BRAUNFELS UTILITIES	2x Weekly	1x Weekly		1x Bi-Weekly	No Guidance	
Austin Water	1x Weekly					Prohibited
SAWS	Any Day	1x Weekly			1x Bi-Weekly	No Guidance
San Marcos	No Guidance	2x Weekly	1x Weekly	1x Bi-Weekly	No Guidance	
Buda	2x Weekly		1x Weekly		1x Bi-Weekly	No Guidance
Kyle	Any Day	2x Weekly	1x Weekly	1x Bi-Weekly		Prohibited
Texas Water	2x Weekly	1x Weekly	1x Bi-Weekly		Prohibited	No Guidance

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Proposed Change to Stage 3, 4, and 5

	Non-Drought	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4	Stage 5
 NBU NEW BRAUNFELS UTILITIES	2x Weekly	1x Weekly		1x Weekly w. Surcharge		
Austin Water		1x Weekly				Prohibited
SAWS	Any Day	1x Weekly			1x Bi-Weekly	No Guidance
San Marcos	No Guidance	2x Weekly	1x Weekly	1x Bi-Weekly	No Guidance	
Buda	2x Weekly	1x Weekly			1x Bi-Weekly	No Guidance
Kyle	Any Day	2x Weekly	1x Weekly	1x Bi-Weekly		Prohibited
Texas Water	2x Weekly	1x Weekly	1x Bi-Weekly		Prohibited	No Guidance

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Stage 4/5 – Operational Flexibility

Focus	Operational Toolbox in Worst-Case-Scenario	
Landscape Watering	Added Enforcement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prohibition of spray-type irrigation
	Remaining Customer Flexibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Watering landscape by hand, soaker, or drip restricted to assigned day, once-per-week, during watering times• Watering trees by hand, soaker, or drip allowed for up to two hours on any day, during watering times, without waste

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LDO Changes Under Consideration Impacting NBU

Variances – Landscape Area Remainder in Stages 3-5

- **Change** – The CoNB's *Land Development Ordinance (LDO)* is proposing reducing new construction turf limitations to no more than 50% for residential (res) and 25% for commercial (comm). These proposed changes will benefit NBU's variance process.

Condition	Baseline Guidance		Additional Guidance
	Res %	Comm %	
Stage 0 (LDO)	50%	25%	50%/75% Approved Ground Cover
Stage 1 (LDO)	50%	25%	50%/75% Approved Ground Cover
Stage 2 (LDO)	50%	25%	50%/75% Approved Ground Cover
Stage 3 (LDO)	50%	25%	50%/75% Approved Ground Cover
Stage 4 (LDO)	50%	25%	50%/75% Approved Ground Cover
Stage 5 (LDO)	50%	25%	50%/75% Approved Ground Cover

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Proposed Changes Summarized

Trigger Levels and Events

- Improved alignment of trigger levels to the Edwards Aquifer Authority
- Expansion of NBU operational flexibility regarding “other considerations” in declaring stage
- Addition of Stages 4 & 5 into trigger levels
- Establishment of NBU water reduction goals for all stages
- Changing from roman numerals to standard numeration for simplicity and peer utility alignment

Drought Surcharge

- Updates to drought surcharge protects essential use customers entirely.
- Increasing applicable surcharge from \$1.00 / \$2.00 per thousand gallons to \$4.18 / \$4.89 per thousand gallons
- Updating surcharge thresholds from increments of 7,500 gallons to increments of 3k, 6k, and 12k gallons to align with current rate tiers

Customer Response

- Updating Variance new grass allotments to align with proposed City of New Braunfels’ Land Development Ordinance (LDO)
- Creation of Stage 4 and 5 flexible strategies at NBU’s operational discretion for use in worst-case-scenarios
- Clarification of verbiage throughout ordinance due to changes listed above

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Next Steps

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Project Milestone Timeline

- ✓ **August 2025** - Informational Presentation to NBU Board
- ✓ **September-December 2025** - CAP Workshops
- ↻ **January & February 2026** - NBU Board Readings
- 🗨 **March 2026** - City Council Readings
- 📅 **April 2026** - New DCP Implemented

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