

# Green Industry Talking Points

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## What could Stage 4 water restrictions mean?

### ECONOMIC IMPACT

- Within the Dallas Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) there are over 34,000 people employed in the nursery/landscape industry with almost a \$2.5 billion economic impact. Please see the annual study compiled by Texas A&M University regarding the economic impact our industry has on the state and the Dallas Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) ([Texas Green Industry Economic Impact](#)). By not allowing any watering and no variances on new installations of landscapes, Stage IV water restrictions would put the retail nursery and garden centers, landscape professionals, allied suppliers and growers out of business.
- The landscape of residential property is the usually the largest uninsured investment a homeowner makes. The urban landscape significantly increases the value of your home. It has been estimated that a mature, well maintained landscape can increase the value of a home by 10-20%. Losing a landscape due to water restrictions could detrimentally impact the community and reduce new and existing home sales in a community.
- At stage 4 water restrictions, grasses such as Bermuda and Buffalograss may be tolerant enough to go dormant and survive until water and cooler temperatures return. However, there could be a substantial loss of shrubs, garden plants, and turf that can directly impact the homeowner when they need to replace what has been lost. Utilizing resources available to keep an established landscape alive during drought will cost far less than replacing an existing landscape and put far less burden on the finances of the homeowner.

### ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

#### **Increased urban/neighborhood temperatures**

Similarly to synthetic turfgrass, the lack of healthy, transpiring plants will increase the temperatures of urban communities substantially. Dr. Jim McAfee at Texas A&M University has measured temperatures on synthetic sports fields as high as 170° F near Dallas in the summer when ambient temperatures were near 100°F. In fact, it has been shown that the average summer temperature over healthy turfgrass is 30° cooler than over pavement.

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## **Soil erosion**

If lawns die off or become thin, there will be exposed topsoil that will be 2X more likely to erode if we encounter a regular rainfall. Loss of topsoil, an invaluable natural resource, could be detrimental to urban communities and directly impact water quality.

## **Nutrient runoff**

Similar to erosion losses, with loss of lawn density, there is a significantly higher opportunity for stored nutrients such as phosphorus and nitrogen can be lost in runoff. Both of these nutrients can be detrimental to surface water quality such as lakes, rivers and streams.

## **Lack of outdoor activity for kids/pets**

The average child today spends 7 minutes a day in unstructured outdoor play. The loss of the landscape and green spaces such as parks due to water restrictions would reduce the ability of children to get outdoors. Outdoor time helps children grow lean and strong, enhances imaginations and attention spans, decreases aggression, and boosts classroom performance. In addition, children who spend time in nature regularly are shown to become better stewards of the environment.

## **Loss of shade**

Loss of shade from trees and shrubs that die due to water restrictions will directly increase air conditioning costs and put a higher demand on the state's energy supply.

## **Loss of habitat for birds, deer, other wildlife**

Loss of plants in the urban landscape will greatly reduce food sources, shelter, and habitat for many birds, deer, and other wildlife that thrive in these urban communities. Due to urbanization, habitats for wildlife have been greatly reduced and utilize landscapes for food and shelter. Reducing these habitats will put extra stress on these populations.

## **Risk to human safety and property damage**

If homeowners and commercial property do not choose to hand water their trees, there is a health and safety risk from falling branches and limbs falling on people or property. This could pose a risk to power lines, building structures, roads, and overall safety.

With dying plant material, the risk of fire could increase dramatically and result in levels of wildfire damages that were seen in the state during the summer of 2011 putting properties and human safety at risk.