

# Issue Analysis Form



**Date:** March 18, 2019

**Item:** Public Hearing for proposed amendments to Chapter 82 of the County Ordinance – Utility Conservation Plan

**Lead Department:** Engineering & Utilities

**Contact Persons:** Frank Haltom, Director

## Description and Current Status

The Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) requires public water conveyers to adopt a water conservation plans to address periods of drought and/or water shortage. The County's conservation plan is included in the County ordinance section 82-40. In addition, DEQ requires a public utility to regulate the use of automatic irrigation systems connected to a public water source to prevent excessive irrigation during periods of rain. Therefore, amendments to Chapter 82 of the County ordinance are recommended to comply with the state regulation. The intent of the regulation is to require automatic irrigation systems to include a rain sensor that will shut off the irrigation when a predetermined amount of rain has fallen, thereby conserving water. This ordinance will become effective on May 1, 2019 and does not require existing irrigation systems to be retrofitted to be compliant with this ordinance.

The draft amendment is attached.

## The Government Path

**Does this require IDA action?**

Yes  No

**Does this require BZA action?**

Yes  No

**Does this require Planning Commission action?**

Yes  No

**Does this require Board of Supervisors action?**

Yes  No

A public hearing must be held prior to amending the ordinance.

## Fiscal Impact Statement

None.

## Prince George County Impact

None.

## Notes

None.

**ORDINANCE TO AMEND “THE CODE OF THE COUNTY OF PRINCE GEORGE,  
VIRGINIA”, 2005, AS AMENDED, BY ADDING § 82-49 REQUIRING THE  
INSTALLATION OF A RAIN SENSOR FOR FUTURE AUTOMATIC IRRIGATION  
SYSTEMS CONNECTED TO A PUBLIC WATER SOURCE TO PREVENT EXCESSIVE  
IRRIGATION DURING PERIODS OF RAIN.**

BE IT ORDAINED by the Board of Supervisors of Prince George County:

- (1) *That The Code of The County of Prince George, Virginia, 2005, as amended, is amended by adding § 82-49, as follows:*

**Sec. 82-49. – Use of Automatic Irrigation System.**

(a) Definitions. For the purposes of this section, the following words and phrases shall have the meanings respectively ascribed to them as follows:

Automatic irrigation system. A device or combination of devices having a hose, pipe, or other conduit installed in the landscape which transmits County water, through which device or combination of devices County water or a mixture of County water and chemicals is drawn and applied to residential or commercial lawns, landscapes or greenspace.

Rain sensor. An electronic device that measures rainfall and will override the irrigation cycle of an automatic irrigation system, thus turning it off, when a predetermined amount of rain has fallen.

(b) Requirements.

- (1) In order to protect the public, health and welfare and insure the integrity of the water system, all irrigation systems installed or upgraded in Prince George County and supplied water by the County after May 1, 2019, shall have a rain sensor gauge, or similar shutoff device approved by the County, set at one-fourth inch or less such that the system is turned off when one-fourth inch or more rain has fallen. To meet the requirements of this section, the rain sensor shall be mounted in an open area outdoors, above ground in an unobstructed location, well suited for gauging rain, according to the manufacturer's specifications. The rain sensor shall override the irrigation controller when adequate rainfall has occurred, which will prevent the automatic irrigation system from watering during rainfall.
- (2) Prince George Utilities' customers with automatic irrigation systems that were installed prior to May 1, 2019, without a rain sensor are encouraged to install a rain sensor.
- (3) All automatic irrigation systems must have a backflow prevention device.
- (4) Requirements of section 82-40 still apply notwithstanding any provisions in this ordinance.

(c) Maintenance.

All rain sensors shall be adjusted and set at one-fourth inch or less so that they automatically shut off when one-fourth inch of rain has fallen. All rain sensors shall be installed according to the manufacturer's instructions in a location that will provide full exposure to rainfall such that accuracy of operation is assured and shall be maintained in good working condition. No person shall adjust either the rain sensor or automatic irrigation system so that the rain sensor is not able to override and turn off the automatic irrigation system after one-fourth inch of rain has fallen. The rain sensor shall automatically interrupt the watering schedule of the automatic irrigation system and return it to its normal schedule after the rain event ends.

*(2) That this Ordinance shall be effective immediately upon adoption.*