



In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

**Master of Science**  
**Heather Turrentine**

Will defend her thesis

**A Comparison of Los Angeles and Phoenix Homeowner's  
Attitudes and Behaviors Towards Outdoor Water Conservation**

**Abstract**

Los Angeles, California and Phoenix, Arizona are two naturally water-scarce regions that rely on imported water to meet their local water needs. Both areas have been experiencing an ongoing drought that has negatively affected their local water supply. Populations in both cities continue to grow, increasing overall demand for water as the supply decreases. Water conservation is important for the sustainability of each town. However, the methods utilized to conserve residential water in the two areas differ drastically; Los Angeles has implemented involuntary water rationing and Phoenix has not.

The widespread effectiveness of involuntary restrictions makes them a popular management scheme. Despite their immediate effectiveness, little is known about how involuntary restrictions affect attitudinal precursors towards the behavior in question and thus, whether or not the restrictions are potentially helpful or harmful to lasting behavior change. This study adapted the Theory of Planned Behavior to survey 361 homeowners in Los Angeles and Phoenix to examine how involuntary water restrictions shape attitudinal precursors towards outdoor water conservation.

It was found that in the presence of involuntary water restrictions, residents feel less in control of their outdoor water use. However, in the presence of involuntary water restrictions, stronger social norms and stronger support for policy prescriptions over outdoor water use were found. The favorable societal support towards water conservation, conceptualized as social norms and policy attitudes, in the presence of involuntary water restrictions is potentially promising for lasting behavior change.

Tuesday, July 5, 2016  
9:30 AM  
Wrigley Hall, room 481

Faculty, students, and the general public are invited.

Supervisory Committee:  
Dr. Sonja Klinsky, Co-chair  
Dr. Kevin Dooley, Co-chair  
Dr. Kelli Laron, Member