

Staff Report

TO: Board of Directors

FROM: Kaycee Strong, Water Efficiency Technician
Aurora Penaluna, Customer Service Administrator

DATE: May 28, 2025

SUBJECT: **Mulch Magic Giveaway**

WATER OPERATIONS

RECOMMENDATION:

Approve the transition from a Mulch Giveaway to a Mulch Rebate.

BACKGROUND:

The Mulch Giveaway Program began in 2016 with the intent to promote water conservation and sustainable landscaping practices by encouraging the use of mulch in residential landscapes. The program initially started by offering Nevada and Placer County residents a voucher for one cubic yard of mulch, redeemable at designated local businesses. In 2018, NID shifted the program to a single-day, first-come, first-served event held at the Nevada County Fairgrounds.

Over the past several years, the program has seen steady participation and has helped raise awareness about conservation within the District. However, staff have identified limitations in the current format, prompting a reevaluation of its overall effectiveness.

Staff-Identified Issues:

- **Lack of Quantity Control:** We are currently unable to effectively enforce limits on the amount of mulch each participant takes. Although the intended limit is one cubic yard per person, some individuals arrive with large dump trailers or make multiple trips.
- **Location Accessibility:** The program is held as a one-day event at the Nevada County Fairgrounds, which poses challenges for Placer County residents in terms of access and convenience.
- **Staffing Costs:** Since the event is held on a Saturday, it requires staff to work overtime, increasing operational costs.

- **Limited Mulch Variety:** We purchase mulch from a single local vendor and only offer one type, which limits choice for participants.

The proposed mulch rebate program will be structured in alignment with our existing rebate programs. By adopting a consistent framework—including application procedures, eligibility criteria, and rebate disbursement methods—the program will integrate seamlessly into the District’s broader water efficiency strategy.

Rebate Program Overview

- **Program Announcement:** Rebates will be announced through multiple channels, including the General Manager's Newsletter, customer bills, the NID website, and YubaNet.
- **First-Come, First-Served:** Rebates will be distributed in the order applications are received, while funding lasts.
- **Eligibility:** Open to Nevada Irrigation District (NID) customers with an active treated or irrigation water account.
- **Limitations:**
 - One rebate per parcel and/or NID account.
 - Applicants must obtain a voucher from NID **before** making a purchase.
 - Vouchers are valid for 30 days from the date of issue.
- **Purchase & Documentation:**
 - Mulch may be purchased from any vendor.
 - Applicants must submit a copy of the sales receipt **and** proof of mulch installation within 30 days of receiving the voucher.
- **Rebate Amount:**
 - Maximum rebate is \$50 or the actual cost of the mulch—whichever is less.
 - Rebate does not cover tax, delivery, or installation costs.
- **Rebate Issuance:** Rebates will be applied as a credit to the customer’s NID account.

BUDGETARY IMPACT:

There is no budgetary impact with this transition, as the current budget includes \$10,000 anticipated for the mulch program, the same as was budgeted in 2024.

KS

Attachments: None