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NEWS RELEASE

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Sacramento Region Significantly Reduces Water Use in Response to Drought

Sustained effort needed for dry, hot months ahead

SACRAMENTO--Sacramento-area residents have reduced their water use by more than 18 percent compared to use during the past two years, according to an analysis by the Regional Water Authority (RWA), which represents water providers in Sacramento, Placer, El Dorado and Yolo counties. The findings come from a review of water use data and conservation information collected by RWA from local water agencies, accounting for more than 90 percent of customer accounts in the area.

California is experiencing one of its worst droughts in decades, and the Sacramento region has been hit especially hard. Folsom Reservoir, a major water source for people and fish, reached historic lows this winter. To preserve water in the region's lakes and rivers, local water providers urged residents to conserve. The RWA board on January 9 passed a resolution urging members to take actions to reduce water use by 20 percent or more. The Governor soon after declared a statewide drought emergency.

RWA's review found that the region's total water production from February through May was 30.2 billion gallons compared to an average of 37 billion gallons during the same timeframe in 2012 and 2013. February was chosen as the starting point for the analysis, because it was the first full month following the regional and statewide call for conservation.

"Clearly, residents have heard the call to conserve and have taken action," said RWA Executive Director John Woodling. "They absolutely deserve to be commended."

Woodling will be presenting the region's results to the State Water Resources Control Board on June 17th as part of a statewide update on actions taken by urban water suppliers to reduce water use during this year's drought.

"It will be critical for everyone to continue conserving water, especially as temperatures peak this summer," said RWA Water Efficiency Program Manager Amy Talbot. "With hot, dry weather ahead, the temptation to ramp up outdoor watering will be intense." Instead of increasing your watering, Talbot offered these landscape survival tips:

- **Use the "Screwdriver Test"**—Before irrigating, check to make sure your landscape really needs water: Stick an eight-inch screwdriver into the ground. If you can push it more than three inches below the surface, your landscape does not need to be watered.
- **Limit landscape watering to two days per week in the summer**—Ultimately, you can make a big dent in your household water use by limiting outdoor watering. Many Sacramento-area water providers have specific landscape irrigation requirements. Contact your water provider or visit BeWaterSmart.info to learn more.
- **Adjust sprinklers to reduce overspray and runoff**—Make sure sprinklers are running efficiently and not watering sidewalks and driveways by checking sprinklers monthly and fixing problems promptly.

Sacramento-area water providers for years have offered free services and rebates to help customers reduce their water use at home and work. These include Water Wise House Calls and Business Calls, as well as rebates to replace water-wasting clothes washers, toilets and irrigation equipment with efficient models. With the drought, several are adding additional rebate programs such as "cash for grass," which pays homeowners to replace thirsty lawn with low-water use plants.

Residents can learn about these free services and rebates, learn more water-wise tips and find a list of local water providers and requested cutbacks at BeWaterSmart.info.

About the Regional Water Authority: RWA is a joint powers authority representing two dozen water providers and affiliates in the greater Sacramento area. Its primary mission is to help its members protect and enhance the reliability, availability, affordability and quality of water resources.