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MEDIA STATEMENT

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Dry Winter Continues

Customers Urged to Restrain from Ramping Up Irrigation

The Regional Water Authority has released the following statement in response to snow survey results announced today by the California Department of Water Resources.

"The California Department of Water Resources snow survey today found that California's snowpack continues to be far below normal for this time of year. Rainfall in Northern California is at 51 percent of the seasonal average compared to 120 percent of the seasonal average to date last year (as of February 16).¹ Currently, Folsom Lake is only at 40 percent of capacity and 70 percent of average for this date.² Moreover, time is running out for a rebound this year.

"The variations in rainfall and reservoir storage from year to year are a constant reminder for all of us to use only the water that we need.

¹ <http://www.usbr.gov/mp/PA/water/>

² <http://cdec.water.ca.gov/cgi-progs/reservoirs/RES>

"While Sacramento-area residents might be tempted to ramp up their landscape irrigation, we continue to recommend restraint.

"Plants typically don't need as much water this time of year, even without rain. Lower temperatures, shorter daylight hours and moisture from fog and rain all combine to reduce the water demands of a typical landscape.³

"Before turning on your irrigation system, check the soil to see and feel if it is still moist by using a garden trowel or shovel to dig down about three to six inches. If the soil is dry several inches or more below the surface, water the landscape one day per week, according to your water provider's schedule.

"Understand that if you have the type of lawn that is dormant in the winter, it will not likely need supplemental water.

"And if it does start to rain, remember to turn the irrigation system off again.

"Over the past several years, the Sacramento region has made great progress when it comes to using water efficiently. For example, residents have so far pledged to save 17.9 million gallons of water by taking the Blue Thumb pledge at BeWaterSmart.info; RWA surveys show that more people are adopting water-wise behaviors such as adjusting their watering schedule according to the season, reducing watering times to prevent runoff and fixing water-wasting problems in the irrigation system; and, as a region, our water use continues to go down.

"But it's important that customers continue to make water efficiency a daily habit. Rain or shine, we should be good stewards of our water resources--for the health of the Sacramento region, the state's economy and to ensure it is available today and for future generations."

³ Edible gardens and fruit bearing trees have special water requirements, so please consult with a landscape professional or your local Master Gardeners for more information.

For more information about free water-efficiency services and rebates, as well as tips for using less water now, residents can contact their local water provider or visit bewatersmart.info, which hosts the Blue Thumb blog where visitors can ask questions of landscape experts and the Blue Thumb pledge to use water efficiently outdoors. Sacramento-area residents have so far pledged to save 17.9 million gallons of water.

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About the Regional Water Authority: *RWA is a joint powers authority representing 24 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.*