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NEWS RELEASE

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Sacramento Region Continues Impressive Water Use Reductions During Drought

SACRAMENTO-- As the state's first-ever emergency regulations mandating water conservation take effect, Sacramento-area customers continue to make impressive progress toward reducing their water use, the Regional Water Authority (RWA) announced today.

While Californian's work to meet the Governor's call to reduce water use by 20 percent, RWA's analysis shows that residents in the Sacramento region have reduced their water use by 18 percent from January through June compared to the same timeframe in 2013 (the State Water Resource Control Board's comparison year for measuring statewide progress).

"Residents in the Sacramento region are among the leaders the state in responding to the drought and deserve to be commended," said RWA's Water Efficiency Program Manager Amy Talbot. "Let's keep it up--conserving water is going to be even more important as we continue in the hot summer months."

Some simple steps to reduce water use include: limit landscape watering to two days per week (following your water provider's guidelines), adjust sprinklers to prevent overspray and runoff, check for leaks inside and outside your home and limit showers to five minutes.

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Already Complying With New Statewide Water Conservation Rules

RWA's analysis further shows that most water providers in the region are already complying with new statewide water conservation rules recently approved by the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB), which took effect July 29, 2014.

The emergency rules direct water providers to ban wasteful practices such as runoff from sprinklers, washing a car without a shut-off nozzle, hosing down driveways and sidewalks and using drinking water in ornamental fountains that don't recirculate. The restrictions also direct water providers with voluntary watering restrictions to make those same restrictions mandatory.

Of the water providers surveyed:

- Ten already had mandatory watering restrictions in place before the SWRCB passed the new regulations.
- Seven with voluntary watering restrictions have either already moved--or soon will be moving--to mandatory restrictions.
- Four water providers, including two investor-owned water utilities, are working with their respective boards or regulators to determine the process for quickly complying.

"While the new regulations also offer water providers the option of fining offenders up to \$500 per violation, Sacramento-area water providers are primarily focused on educating customers about using water efficiently, and continuing the enforcement programs they already have in place," Talbot said.

"The new regulations really are serving to raise awareness statewide that California is experiencing one of its worst droughts in decades, and everyone needs to do their part to conserve water," Talbot said.

RWA is releasing the attached Frequently Asked Questions sheet about the new regulations to help customers understand how they might be impacted. The sheet answers questions about

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enforcement and the optional fine outlined in the regulations. The sheet also will be posted to BeWaterSmart.info.

Water providers are committed to helping their customers conserve water, and many offer free programs and rebates to help residents reduce water use. For more information, as well as tips for conserving water at home or work, contact your local water provider or visit www.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.*

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**Frequently Asked Questions
State Water Resources Control Board Emergency Water Use
Regulations
August 4, 2014**

OVERVIEW

With California in a severe drought, the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) on July 15th approved emergency regulations to increase water conservation by water providers and their customers. The new regulations, which took effect July 29th, identify four prohibited water uses and offer water providers the option of fining offenders up to \$500 per violation.

Prohibited uses of potable water:

- Outdoor watering that causes runoff onto adjacent property, including sidewalks and streets
- Washing vehicles with a hose that does not have an automatic shut-off nozzle
- Washing driveways and sidewalks, except for health and safety purposes
- Operating a fountain or decorative water feature that does not have a recirculating system

The action is part of the SWRCB's continuing efforts to cut water use statewide and to ensure that water providers have effective plans in place to curb water waste. They serve as a stark reminder that water supply conditions are at serious levels. California is experiencing one of its worst droughts in decades, and everyone needs to do their part to conserve water.

Water providers are committed to helping their customers conserve water, and many offer free programs and rebates to help residents reduce water use. For more information, as well as tips for conserving water at home or work, contact your local water provider or visit www.BeWaterSmart.info.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How is the Sacramento region doing in terms of water conservation?

Sacramento-area residents have reduced their water use by 18 percent from January-June 2014 compared to use during the same time period in 2013. This is in stark contrast to many other parts of the state that are falling short of meeting the Governor's call for a 20 percent reduction in water use.

We urge everyone to continue their efforts to reduce water use. Conserving water is going to be even more important as we continue in the hot summer months. Everyone needs to do their part to conserve, especially outdoors where most water use and water waste occurs. Some simple steps are to limit landscape watering to two days per week (following your water

provider's guidelines), adjust sprinklers to prevent overspray and runoff, check for leaks inside and outside your home and limit showers to five minutes.

What are water providers doing to comply with the emergency regulations?

The emergency regulations require water providers to prohibit water waste outlined in the emergency regulations, as well as to make their outdoor watering restrictions mandatory rather than voluntary.

Outdoor watering restrictions vary by agency. Each water provider has a unique mix of water supplies, which influences how much and in which ways customers are required to cut back. Some, such as the City of Sacramento, prescribe certain watering days and fines for water misuse, while other agencies do not. It's important that customers check with their water provider to learn their specific restrictions.

Many water providers, such as the cities of Sacramento, Roseville and Folsom, already have ordinances in place that comply with the new regulations. Others are moving quickly to comply. Sacramento Suburban Water District, for example, recently passed a resolution that activates mandatory watering restrictions, as directed by the SWRCB.

How will the restrictions be enforced? Will water wasters receive a \$500 ticket?

The SWRCB is leaving it to local agencies to implement the restrictions, including their enforcement. Some water providers with mandatory restrictions already actively patrol for water waste. Others are moving quickly to comply with the SWRCB's requirement to trigger mandatory watering restrictions.

However, it is less likely that a water provider will utilize the SWRCB's option of fining water wasters up to \$500. Water providers try to educate customers about efficient watering practices and reducing water waste. Many even distribute hose nozzles with shut-off valves to help residents comply with water waste restrictions. When a resident is identified as violating watering or water waste restrictions, most water providers issue a warning. This warning typically does not involve a fine, but instead offers an opportunity for water providers to educate residents about efficient watering and water waste practices. Typically fines are issued only if a resident does not respond to a water provider's initial education efforts. If issued, a fine will most likely follow a water provider's existing fine structure. Fine structures vary among water providers. Check with your water provider to find out more information.

How will I be affected?

The emergency rules direct water providers to ban wasteful practices such as runoff from sprinklers, washing a car without a shut-off nozzle, hosing down driveways and sidewalks and using drinking water in ornamental fountains that don't recirculate. Most water providers in the Sacramento region already ban such practices, and customers are unlikely to see a huge change from water waste restrictions now in place.

As far as watering restrictions go, water providers with voluntary watering restrictions must now make watering restrictions mandatory. Mandatory means the water restrictions will be enforceable. Most water providers use a warning and fine-based enforcement system (as described above). The degree to which a water provider will enforce these watering restrictions will vary throughout the region and will be based on water supply conditions, availability of enforcement staff and other local resources.

Will customers be allowed to wash sidewalks and driveways?

The new regulations allow cleaning sidewalks and driveways with water only for public health and safety reasons. Public health and safety standards may be defined differently by each local unit of government. Check with your water provider or municipality for more details.

How do customers avoid runoff from outdoor watering?

Runoff onto sidewalks and streets as a result of outdoor watering means that the sprinkler system needs to be adjusted. This could be as simple as making sure all of the nozzles are pointing directly on the lawn or slightly more complex like adjusting sprinkler system pressure. If a customer has a controller or timer, the settings may need to be changed to shorter watering times. For more information, visit www.BeWaterSmart.info.

Will customers be allowed to wash their cars at home?

The new regulations allow car washing at home, but only with an automatic shut-off nozzle on the garden hose (also remember to follow your agency's guidelines for watering days). Residents should only wash their car on the same days that allow outdoor watering. Even better--skip the hand wash and use a commercial carwash that reuses and recycles the wash water. These types of commercial carwashes typically use less water per car than the average home car wash. Additionally the water used by commercial car washes is treated before it goes into our rivers and streams minimizing water quality impacts. At home, the water used for car washing collects pollutants from sidewalks and streets as it leaves your property and is often discharged directly into our rivers and streams.

How can I report water waste?

We appreciate the public's help with identifying water waste. If you see any problems, please contact your local water provider. If you're not sure who that is, you can search for your water provider and find water waste hotline contact information at www.BeWaterSmart.info or by calling the Be Water Smart hotline at 1-888-WTR-TIPS.

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