

PRESS RELEASE

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City asks citizens to conserve water this holiday season

City Council to consider triggering Water Shortage Conservation Plan on Jan. 7

City staff is asking residents and businesses to voluntarily cutback water use and is preparing to ask City Council to activate the Water Shortage Conservation Plan at its first Council meeting of 2014.

While the City is not facing an immediate crisis, a record dry year and critically low water levels at Folsom Reservoir present serious concerns for the region's water suppliers. Folsom Reservoir is at 21 percent of capacity and is expected to drop below one-fifth of its capacity in early January, a historically low level. Current weather forecasts do not predict any measurable precipitation through at least the first week of January.

During the next two weeks, staff will be assessing the situation to determine whether to ask Council at the January 7 meeting to take action that could lead to voluntary or mandated water conservation measures.

The City's water supply is diverse, coming from both the Sacramento and American rivers, as well as groundwater wells in the northern part of the City. However, in response to the unusually dry conditions, the City is working with other local water agencies and stakeholders through the American River Water Forum to encourage water conservation. The City is also taking other steps to help protect the fish and wildlife within the Lower American River and assure a reliable water supply for the region.

Concurrently, the Department of Utilities will begin increasing existing water waste patrols and increase enforcement of wintertime watering restrictions, which limit outdoor watering to once per week on either Saturday or Sunday.

“The department will also work closely with other City departments to ensure outdoor watering of parks and public spaces is in compliance with the City's Water Conservation Ordinance,” said Dave Brent, director of the Department of Utilities. “Citizens can report water waste through 311, either by calling or using the 311 app for iPhones and droids.”

Residents should reduce outdoor irrigation during the winter months when many plants are dormant and may not need much water this time of year when temperatures are lower temperatures, and days are shorter.

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While most water use is outdoors for irrigation, citizens can consider reducing indoor use in the following ways:

Reduce

- Wash only full loads of clothes--Save 15 gallons per load
- Don't leave water running while rinsing dishes--Save 2.5 gallons per minute
- Turn off water when brushing teeth or shaving--Save approximately 10 gallons per day
- Take shorter showers and save 2.5 gallons per minute, for every minute you shorten your shower

Repair

- Fix leaky toilets--Save 50-100 gallons per day per toilet
- Fix leaky faucets--Save 15-20 gallons per day per leak

Retrofit

- Install a high-efficiency WaterSense-labeled toilet (1.28 gallons per flush)--Save 19 gallons per person/day and receive a rebate of up to \$125 for replacing a pre-1994 toilet, beginning January 1.
- Install a water-efficient clothes washer--Save 15 gallons/load (average top loader is 30-40 gallons per load). \$125 rebate available for a CEE tier 3 eligible clothes washer. Visit www.smud.org for updated program funding availability.
- Install efficient, WaterSense-labeled shower heads--Save at least 1 gallon per minute (or 10 gallons per average 10 minute shower).

The City of Sacramento is committed to helping residents use water efficiently and offers free services and rebates to help residents use less water. These include Water Wise House Calls by a trained water efficiency expert, and rebates for replacing water-wasting toilets, clothes washers and irrigation equipment with high-efficiency brands. Learn more by calling 311 or e-mailing 311@cityofsacramento.org.

For more information on our Water Conservation Program, please see our website at www.sparesacwater.org.

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