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NEWS RELEASE

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Sacramento Region Water Picture Better Than a Year Ago *But Overcoming Drought Will Remain a Challenge*

SACRAMENTO--Amy Talbot, Water Efficiency Program Manager for the Regional Water Authority (RWA), released the following statement in response to snow survey results announced today by the California Department of Water Resources.

"The Sacramento region is in better shape now than we were a year ago. The recent storms improved conditions, and it's encouraging to see water levels rise at Folsom Reservoir.

"But much of the recent rain was soaked up by the soil, which has also been dried out by drought conditions over the last few years, including above-normal temperatures. And even with December's strong storms, the December 2014 snow survey showed a statewide snow water equivalent of 4.8 inches or 50% of average for this time of year, which is significant. This is an improvement in conditions compared to last winter's December survey, which showed the statewide snow water equivalent of only 20% of normal. The annual snowpack normally provides about a third of the water for California's homes and farms as it melts into lakes, streams and aquifers during the spring and summer.

"The California Department of Water Resources' Director, Mark Cowin, states that although this year's survey shows a deeper snowpack than last year, California needs much more rain and snow than we've experienced over the past two years to end the drought in 2015. The department encourages Californians to continue their water conservation practices.

"Let's all continue to hope for more snow in the new year. In the meantime, water providers are planning for continued drought, and we're asking everyone to continue conserving water this winter.

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"Sacramento-area residents did an outstanding job conserving water in 2014, leading the state in water reductions for much of the year. We urge residents to keep up the great work. Even small actions can add up to significant savings. Here are our top tips for conserving water this winter:

- **Let Mother Nature do the watering:** Keep sprinklers off until spring, watering by hand only if the weather stays dry for several weeks in a row.
- **Limit shower time:** Less time in the shower can pay off with big savings, even if you already have a water-efficient showerhead. Keeping showers to five minutes (instead of 10) will save 12.5 gallons every time.
- **Don't let water run while hand washing dishes:** Every minute the kitchen faucet runs sends 2.5 gallons of water down the drain. Instead of allowing the water to run, turn the water on and off as needed. Or, better yet, take a break from hand washing altogether and use the (fully loaded) dishwasher instead, which typically uses less water.
- **Wash only full loads of laundry:** Waiting until the washer is full can save 15 to 45 gallons per load, depending upon the efficiency of your machine. Other water-wise laundry tips: Wash clothes in cold water (which will also retain their color), select the minimum amount of water required per load (for machines with a variable water volume setting) and use the shortest wash cycle for lightly soiled clothes.
- **Turn off the faucet when brushing teeth or shaving:** Every minute the bathroom faucet runs sends 2 gallons of water down the drain. Multiply that by the number of times you brush or shave a day, and all that water adds up. Instead of running a steady stream, use short bursts of water to rinse to save at least 10 gallons a day.

"Learn more water-saving tips, plus information about rebates and free services available to help residents use less water 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.

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