



The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California

NEWS RELEASE

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METROPOLITAN INCREASES REBATE FOR POPULAR TURF PROGRAM TO PROMOTE WATER SAVINGS OUTDOORS

The Metropolitan Water District is giving Southern Californians another reason to replace their thirsty grass with more sustainable landscaping – more money.

Metropolitan’s Board of Directors voted Tuesday (Feb. 12) to double the rebate the agency offers for replacing turf, increasing it to \$2 a square foot of grass removed. The board also adopted other changes to make it easier to participate in the program.

“There are already a lot of reasons for Southern Californians to be more water-efficient in their yards. Gardens filled with succulents, poppies and other California natives are beautiful and attract birds and butterflies. And as the climate changes, we all need to be doing our part to permanently reduce our water use,” Metropolitan board Chairwoman Gloria Gray said. “But as if that isn’t enough, we’re offering a little extra incentive through our turf replacement program.”

Applications for the rebate will be available at bewaterwise.com beginning April 1. Up to \$50 million in applications will be accepted each year. Some of Metropolitan’s member agencies also will offer additional cash incentives.

In 2014 and 2015, during the peak of California’s record-breaking drought, Metropolitan offered a similar [turf removal rebate](#) as part of the nation’s largest water conservation program. The immensely popular program spurred the removal of 160 million square feet of grass across Southern California – expected to annually save 21,600 acre-feet of water, enough to serve about 64,000 households.

Metropolitan brought the rebate back last year at a reduced amount of \$1 for each square foot of turf removed. The increased rebate is expected to help Metropolitan meet its goal to conserve an additional 180,000 acre-feet of water by 2040, enough water for about 540,000 Southern California homes.

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“Increasing conservation in the region is a key pillar of ensuring the Southland has a reliable water supply for decades to come,” Metropolitan General Manager Jeffrey Kightlinger said. “More than half of all household water use occurs outside, so swapping out grass for more water-efficient landscapes and native plants can go a long way to reaching our conservation goals.”

“The drought inspired a lot of people to make this change – and driving through neighborhoods today you see some beautiful results. But climate change and our growing economy means we all need to increase our long-term water efficiency, regardless of the weather,” Kightlinger added.

Other changes to the turf replacement program approved by Metropolitan’s board include:

- Increasing the maximum square footage to 5,000 square feet for residential projects and 50,000 square feet for commercial projects, allowing larger properties, such as schools and parks, to participate.
- Removing the requirement that program participants must first remove turf from their front yard.
- Decreasing the number of replacement plants required for areas where grass has been removed to three plants per 100 square feet.

Rules also require a landscape plan, a watershed approach, efficient irrigation and mulch coverage. Synthetic turf is not eligible for the program.

More information about the turf replacement program and about water-efficient landscaping, as well as other water-saving and rebate programs, is available at Metropolitan’s online water-saving portal, bewaterwise.com.

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The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California is a state-established cooperative that, along with its 26 cities and retail suppliers, provide water for nearly 19 million people in six counties. The district imports water from the Colorado River and Northern California to supplement local supplies, and helps its members to develop increased water conservation, recycling, storage and other resource-management programs.