



The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California

NEWS RELEASE

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DESPITE NOTICEABLE TASTE AND ODOR,
TAP WATER POSES NO HEALTH HAZARD
**Earthy, musty taste and smell in drinking water in
three Southland counties could persist for couple weeks**

Consumers in portions of three Southern California counties may detect an earthy and musty taste and odor in their tap water, but water quality experts stressed it is an aesthetic problem and not a health issue.

Officials at the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California said algae growth in Silverwood Lake is affecting the taste and odor of tap water being delivered to eastern Los Angeles County communities as well as western San Bernardino and southwest Riverside counties. The impacts may vary from region to region, as local agencies blend imported Metropolitan water with local supplies.

“Metropolitan receives a portion of its water through the State Water Project’s east branch, which includes Silverwood Lake in the San Bernardino Mountains. We are working with the state Department of Water Resources—which owns and operates the state system—to address the situation,” said Jim Green, Metropolitan’s manager of water system operations.

“Consumers, however, can be assured that the taste-and-odor issues they may be experiencing in their tap water do not pose any health risks.”

Green said DWR plans to treat the algae bloom early next week. He suggested consumers may consider refrigerating drinking water to help improve its taste until the problem diminishes. He cautioned, however, that the problem may persist for a couple of weeks.

Algae growth in open surface reservoirs is typically a seasonal problem that usually occurs in warm months. As in previous years, the cause of the current taste-and-odor episode has been identified as geosmin, a nuisance compound produced from the growth of certain algae in freshwaters throughout the world. People with sensitive taste and smell can detect the compound in water at low levels.

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Metropolitan member public agencies impacted by the problem include Three Valleys Municipal Water District, serving eastern Los Angeles County; Inland Empire Utilities Agency in western San Bernardino County; as well as Eastern Municipal Water District and Western Municipal Water District in southwest Riverside County.

Consumers interested in receiving additional information about the quality of Metropolitan's drinking water supplies can visit the website, mwdh2o.com, for the district's annual water quality report and other related materials.

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The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California is a cooperative of 26 cities and water agencies serving 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.