



*The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California*

# NEWS RELEASE

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## METROPOLITAN REMINDS CONSUMERS, BUSINESSES TO FORGO OUTDOOR WATERING DURING UPCOMING STORMS

As the Southland braces for a series of storms that are expected to provide the region with much-needed rain and snow through the weekend, Metropolitan Water District officials today reminded consumers and businesses to shut off their sprinkler systems and abstain from irrigating outdoors to help save water.

“These storms are certainly a welcome way to bring in the new year, especially after last year’s record dry conditions,” said Metropolitan General Manager Jeff Kightlinger. “However, we must keep in mind that Southern California still faces a number of water supply challenges in 2008.”

Kightlinger said Southern Californians can do their part to help local agencies build and maintain reserves heading into 2008 by immediately refraining from watering outdoors, where up to 70 percent of residential use occurs. Dry conditions have already caused many local water agencies to draw down reservoirs and groundwater supplies.

"Although it looks like Mother Nature will be providing us with an early year gift, we're relying on residents and businesses to continue to pitch in and conserve as much water as they can to help stretch available supplies in 2008," Kightlinger said. "We all need to be reminded that the water we save today is water we can call upon in the future to help meet our supply challenges."

While the expected storms are certainly welcomed locally, Metropolitan’s Chief Operating Officer Debra Man noted that Southern California relies on supplies imported by the district from Northern California and the Colorado River for about half of its annual water needs.

Even though these and other similar storms are expected to help augment the snow packs in the Sierra Nevada and Rocky Mountains this weekend, those watersheds are far from recovering, Man said. She noted, for example, that the Colorado River just completed its eighth year of record drought in 2007, leaving major reservoirs along the river at historic lows.

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“Complicating our water picture is that the state is in the midst of the first 10-day restriction on pumping operations in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta in response to a federal court order aimed at addressing declining populations of the threatened Delta smelt,” Man said. “Over the course of the year and beyond, Southern California and other parts of the state stand to lose as much as 30 percent of their supplies from Northern California next year and possibly longer, under the court order.”

The largest estuary on the West Coast, the Delta is an important drinking water source for 25 million Californians in the Bay Area, San Joaquin Valley, Central Coast and Southern California.

In addition to immediately reducing their water demands during the upcoming storms by refraining from outdoor watering, consumers and businesses can realize more substantial savings over the long term by checking their sprinkler systems for leaks, overspray and broken sprinkler heads, Man suggested.

“Fixing or adjusting an inefficient outdoor sprinkler system can save up to 500 gallons of water a month. Another option is to invest in a ‘smart’ sprinkler controller, which saves up to 40 gallons a day,” Man said.

Detailed information on Metropolitan’s conservation and rebate programs can be found under the Rebates section of MWD’s Web site, [bewaterwise.com](http://bewaterwise.com).

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*The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California is a cooperative of 26 cities and water agencies serving 18 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.*