



The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California

NEWS RELEASE

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CUT OUTDOOR WATERING AT LEAST ONE DAY A WEEK, METROPOLITAN
URGES IN LATEST SERIES OF REGION-WIDE ADVERTISEMENTS

**Looking to save critical water reserves this summer,
agency launches 13-week conservation ad campaign**

Marking the first time Metropolitan Water District has specifically directed consumers to reduce their landscape irrigation, the agency today unveiled its latest series of advertisements urging residents to cut outdoor watering at least one day a week and help preserve Southern California's water reserves.

Scheduled to run over the next 13 weeks, the advertisements are part of the largest multi-pronged public information and outreach campaign in Metropolitan's history. The spring "Cut Your Water Use" campaign, prepared in cooperation with Metropolitan's 26 member public agencies, includes 10-second television spots, 60-second radio advertisements and 30-second public service announcements, as well as print and on-line ads throughout the district's six-county service area through July 13.

"Through these advertisements, we're trying to build on our existing conservation programs with an outreach campaign to reinforce to Southern Californians just how serious our water challenge is," said Metropolitan board Chairman Timothy F. Brick.

"A strong water conservation ethic in Southern California isn't just needed in dry years. Consumers and businesses need to incorporate permanent changes to ensure we use water as efficiently as possible—particularly outdoors, where up to 70 percent of water is used," Brick said. "Conservation needs to be the new normal in Southern California in each and every year. We need to save water year in and year out, not just when times are dry and temperatures rise."

Nancy Sutley, chair of the Metropolitan's board's Water Planning and Stewardship Committee and a city of Los Angeles representative on the MWD board, noted that Metropolitan is on track this year to draw on as much as one-quarter of the agency's critical reserves stored in reservoirs and groundwater basins. "At this rate," she said, "we could deplete our stored reserves in a few years."

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By cutting outdoor watering by one day a week, consumers can help us save as much as 224,000 acre-feet of water a year—equivalent to the total amount of water used in the cities of Anaheim, Burbank, Long Beach and Pasadena in a year. That saved water can be kept in Metropolitan’s storage accounts for the future to possibly stave off the need to allocate supplies in coming years. (An acre-foot of water is nearly 326,000 gallons, about the amount used by two typical Southland families in and around their homes in a year.)

Metropolitan General Manager Jeff Kightlinger said the advertisements’ simple, yet serious message is a reflection of the Southland’s water situation. Despite early season storms and rain, the region continues to face supply challenges in 2008 and in coming years, he said.

“The storms earlier this year have left many people with the mistaken impression that our water worries are over. Nothing could be further from the truth,” Kightlinger said. “In the end, the early supply returns from the rain and snowpack have failed to wash away the need for all of us to use less water.

“As hard as it may be for some to believe, the fact is that all the supply gains we made during the first couple months of this year have been wiped out by the extremely dry conditions we’ve experienced since March. In fact, this past March was among the driest on record in California, leaving some areas of the Southland on track for an average and, in some cases, below-average rain year,” Kightlinger added.

Dry conditions have been duplicated in the Sierra Nevada, which supplies Southern California with up to a third of its water. Despite normal Sierra snowpack levels, the volume of actual snowmelt runoff is down more than 35 percent in California, adding to the state’s growing water supply and delivery challenges.

In addition, Southern California continues to bear the brunt of a court-imposed curtailment in deliveries from the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta in response to declining populations of Delta smelt. So far this year, that federal court ruling has reduced Metropolitan’s deliveries from the State Water Project by about 260,000 acre-feet—a 30 percent supply hit, following 2007’s dry conditions.

“In the meantime, we’re digesting another federal court ruling issued Wednesday that covers winter-run Chinook salmon, spring-run Chinook and the Central Valley steelhead. We’re trying to determine whether this ruling could lead to further reductions in water deliveries from the Delta,” Kightlinger said.

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The television and public service spots use stylized animation to demonstrate to consumers and businesses how easy it is to save water by cutting outdoor watering at least one day a week, without impacting the health of your plants and landscaping.

“There is no room for water waste in our water future,” Brick said. “That’s why we’ve been at the forefront of the water-use efficiency message. Since 2002, through our continuing advertising campaigns and public outreach efforts, we have been drawing consumers’ attention to the amount of water used outdoors and calling on them to stop over-watering their plants, which is a major landscape-killer.

“This spring campaign takes that a step further. Cutting outdoor watering by at least one day a week may not seem like much, but believe me, it can make a tremendous difference,” Brick added.

Advertisements in English, Spanish and Mandarin Chinese will run on 28 radio stations spanning Metropolitan’s 5,200-square-mile service area, from Ventura to the Mexican border. Information provided on “bewaterwise.com” includes handy water-saving tips and tools, and information on rebates for conservation devices.

Color quarter-page print ads are scheduled to appear in 22 newspapers throughout the region, including the Los Angeles Times, San Diego Union-Tribune, Orange County Register, Riverside’s Press-Enterprise, the Ventura Star and Los Angeles Newspaper Group publications in late April and early June. The ad-run also includes La Opinion, La Prensa, Chinese Daily News, Korea Daily, the Californian Examiner (Filipino) and Viet Bao Daily News (Vietnamese).

Metropolitan’s year-long \$6.3 million advertising and outreach campaign has included the call for voluntary water conservation, promoted water-saving rebates and incentives, and educated the public about the uncertainties of future supplies.

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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.