



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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El Toro Water District Calls for Water Use Efficiency, Despite the “End of the Drought”

The District responds to the Governor’s drought declaration and recent actions by regional water suppliers.

Lake Forest, CA –The recent announcement by the Department of Water Resources that the Sierra snowpack is 165 percent of average for this time of year, has generated announcements from the Governor, and allocation modifications by regional water suppliers, Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (Metropolitan) and the Municipal Water District of Orange County (MWDOC).

Based on the abundance of the snowpack and a pattern of decreased use, both Metropolitan and MWDOC have terminated the allocation programs that had restricted the amount of water provided to El Toro Water and water districts across Orange County.

Even though hydrologic conditions have improved significantly, El Toro Water District is urging customers to continue to practice water use efficiency. “Droughts are cyclical and largely unpredictable, and a reliable water supply is essential to the well being of our communities and the economy,” shares Bob Hill, General Manager of El Toro Water District.

This week, El Toro Water District Board of Directors will review the Level 1 Water Supply Shortage Alert that was declared May 2009. “Our goal is to continue to provide the cleanest and safest water at the most economical price,” says Hill. “Our customers have been very responsive to our calls for water use reductions and embraced the transition to the water budget based tiered conservation rate structure to promote continued efficiency and cost control.”

“One of the questions that has surfaced related to the Governor’s announcement, and those of water suppliers, is about water rates and whether the rates will decrease,” says Hill.

“Unfortunately, the reduction in drought conditions will not bring a reduction in water costs. The District purchases 100% of its water from Metropolitan. The cost of our water is determined by Metropolitan, and one of the most significant pricing factors is the cost of importing water to Southern California.”

Metropolitan gets its water from the Colorado River – over 200 miles to the east – and from Northern California – over 400 miles away. This water moves through a complex system of pipes, canals and aqueducts as it is lifted hundreds of feet over mountains and hills by massive pumps. This extensive delivery system, a lifeline to a region that has no natural aquifer, is expensive to operate and maintain. While Metropolitan recently terminated the allocation program which restricted the amount of water provided to each district and imposed penalties if consumption exceeded the allocation, Metropolitan will continue to raise water rates. In early 2011 Metropolitan announced that it projects annual increases in water costs through 2020.

“Given the vulnerability associated with such a lengthy conveyance system, as well as the rising costs, El Toro Water District continues to look for ways to diversify its water resources,” shares Hill. “We need to continue to improve the flexibility of our statewide, regional and local water systems to collect and store surplus water in wet years for delivery in dry years.”

Projects being discussed in the water industry that would allow diversification include improvements to the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta, development of above and below ground storage, recycled water, ocean desalination, brackish groundwater desalination and continued water use efficiency.

For more information about El Toro Water District and its continued commitment to water use efficiency, please visit www.etwd.com or call 949.837.0660.

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The El Toro Water District is a full service water, wastewater and recycled water district, providing water service across portions of the cities of Aliso Viejo, Lake Forest, Laguna Hills and Mission Viejo and the entire city of Laguna Woods.