



The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California

NEWS RELEASE

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**SOUTHLAND'S IMPROVED WATER RESERVE CONDITIONS ALLOW METROPOLITAN'S BOARD TO LIFT MANDATORY RESTRICTIONS
Consumers water-saving efforts plays role in helping region reduce imported water demands; continued wise water use necessary**

Improvement in Southern California water reserves and the water-saving efforts of the region's consumers and businesses has enabled the Southland's largest imported water provider to end its call for mandatory water restrictions.

Less than two weeks after Gov. Jerry Brown announced an end to California's drought, Metropolitan Water District's Board of Directors voted today to restore full imported water deliveries to the district's 26 member public agencies for the first time in nearly two years.

The action, which becomes effective Wednesday (April 13), was made possible by this season's storms and the public's continued conservation and water use efficiency efforts resulting in improved regional supply conditions.

"We join our member agencies and retailers throughout the region in thanking consumers for their water-saving efforts," said Metropolitan board Chairman John V. Foley. "Continued wise water practices will be necessary in order to maintain our reserves. This is a welcome respite from more acute shortage conditions we have faced in recent years."

Metropolitan General Manager Jeffrey Kightlinger said the district anticipates storing up to 800,000 acre-feet of water this year, nearly equivalent to the amount that can be stored in the region's largest storage reservoir, Diamond Valley Lake in southwest Riverside County.

"Conserving water and maintaining wise water use remains as essential as ever, despite the improved water supply conditions in California and the West," Kightlinger said.

"The improved short-term conditions, however, do not signal an end to the region's long-term water challenges. Conservation and wise water use must continue to be a permanent way of life in Southern California," Kightlinger said. "We anticipate residential consumers and businesses throughout the Southland will continue to use water efficiently."

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“All of our member agencies exceeded the water-savings targets we initially set in July 2009, which is an indication as to why we are confident that lower water use will continue into the future,” he added.

Lifting the allocation restrictions will allow local agencies with groundwater basins to purchase water without financial penalty and store it. Groundwater reserves, which were significantly tapped throughout the Southland’s six-county region over the past several years due to previous dry conditions, have improved due to rain and local runoff.

The progress this winter has allowed Metropolitan to make significant strides in replenishing its network of groundwater storage programs and surface storage reservoirs. Today, Metropolitan’s Diamond Valley Lake is nearly full, after being less than half full in the summer of 2009, and the district has more than a full-year’s worth of supply deliveries in reserve.

Despite Sierra Nevada snowpack conditions far above normal, Metropolitan will not receive a full supply from Northern California this year because of environmental problems and pumping restrictions in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta.

A comprehensive package of water system/ecosystem improvements is necessary in the Delta in order to improve long-term water reliability for Metropolitan and much of California, Kightlinger said. The comprehensive plan is moving forward via the state-federal Bay Delta Conservation Plan effort, which Metropolitan supports.

In the meantime, Metropolitan’s other imported water source—the Colorado River—continues to recover from an 11-year drought.

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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.