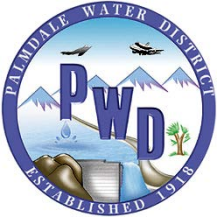


PALMDALE WATER DISTRICT

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October 7, 2015

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The Fight for Water Reliability during the Historic Drought

Palmdale, CA – Last week, the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) released August water conservation figures for all 406 reporting water agencies. While the Statewide average of 27% exceeds the Governor's mandatory 25% reduction, many water agencies have fallen short of achieving their reduction mandates. The Palmdale Water District (PWD) fell short of its goal by 2.6%. The SWRCB governs all water, both above and below ground, and is strictly enforcing these water conservation mandates. Fines up to \$10,000 per day could be issued to those water agencies found in non-compliance of their given reduction goal.

Palmdale is split by two water agencies, PWD and L.A. County Water Works (LACWW). Each agency has their own water restriction policies and mechanisms for achieving their mandated water reductions. The PWD chose to issue watering guidelines to the community rather than burden the customer with achieving an arbitrary reduction figure given to them by LACWW.

These guidelines are meant to simplify outdoor water usage where 70% of residential water is used, rather than concern the community with reaching a number. Comparing the Residential Gallons Per Capita per Day (R-GPCD) usage figures from August, shows that PWD customers use on average 38.7 gallons of water less per day than LACWW customers; 181.5 (LACWW) vs. 142.8 (PWD), respectively.

Comparing PWD customer bills between January-September (2014-2015), District rate payers have seen a reduction in water use for an average residential household of four people go from \$52.58 in 2014 to \$48.70 in 2015, regardless of the drought surcharge. Additionally, concerns regarding property values due to the drought and perceived high water rates have been dismissed with the recent news, featured in the State-of-the-City address, showing an increase in property values by 8.3% for the Palmdale community, even in the midst of the on-going drought and State mandated watering restrictions.

Recent water waste penalties from the PWD have been issued to all rate payers who have not been following the water restriction guidelines. The community has reduced consumption since June by an average of 29.4%; less than the State of California's required 32% for the PWD service area. Rather than immediately penalize the community beginning in June for water consumption violations, the PWD began issuing warnings to those businesses, residences, and municipal facilities to educate them on the new State required reduction figure. Unfortunately, that process fell short and the State issued the PWD a warning letter that directed the District to begin issuing penalties to water waste violators.

Uncertainty regarding long-term water resources is a concern for all community residents and businesses. The State has failed to continue to invest in water resource development, and adequate supply is a major challenge due to the lack of available snowpack for the last several winters. This has created a shortage in the supply stream to southern California which has been driving PWD's future planning initiatives to provide more reliability for current and future customers.

District customers are now relying on almost 80% groundwater to service community water needs with no replenishment occurring due to the lack of precipitation. One key PWD project proposes using recycled water blended with raw water to replenish groundwater supply. It is entering into the preliminary design and environmental review phases. Storing water underground reduces evaporation and is an additional natural filter.

Frustration within the community has been growing due to some residents and businesses doing their part in following PWD watering guidelines while others have not. This crisis requires the entire District to work together to ensure that we all have this resource available into the future.

Monies generated from penalties have been put into an account to use to pay for any fines issued by the State to the PWD or to increase existing rebate programs the District offers to community residents.

The majority of revenue generated from water bills is used to reinvest into our infrastructure in order to ensure that water delivery is optimized and water leaks are minimized. PWD uses Granular Activated Carbon at its treatment plant due to its cost effective removal of impurities and any chemicals used in the treatment of the water. Fiscal responsibility and proper management of monetary and water resources has helped keep water rates down.

The uncertainty of weather patterns, temperatures, water allocation from the State, groundwater availability, and consumption demands means that the State's water conservation mandates are here to stay. Working together as a community will ensure that Palmdale has enough water to both meet the needs currently and into the future.

The Water District is asking the community to continue pushing to conserve water where they can, only water outside on Wednesdays and Saturdays before 10:00am and after 6:00pm. To report water waste or watering at non-designated times by calling 661-456-1099 or emailing at waste@palmdalewater.org. For more information regarding the Palmdale Water District's watering restrictions, visit www.palmdalewater.org.

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