



Media Release

STATE WATER BOARD REPORTS IMPROVEMENT IN URBAN WATER CONSERVATION RATES FOR NOVEMBER *INDIVIDUAL WATER USE ALSO CONTINUES TO DECLINE ACCORDING TO PER CAPITA DAILY WATER USE NUMBERS*

**For Immediate Release
Jan. 6, 2015**

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SACRAMENTO –Against the backdrop of early season rainfall that has delivered only a third of what would be needed to end the prolonged drought, statewide residential water conservation in November climbed to a 9.8 percent reduction in year-over-year water use. This change was an improvement from the October data, which indicated conservation efforts were slipping, compared to previous months.

In the most recent survey of nearly 400 urban water retailers, while the amount of water conserved by residential and commercial customers statewide continues to hover at around 10 percent, many of the State’s hydrologic regions are seeing marked increases in conservation efforts. Conservation reporting by the State’s largest retail water suppliers began in July, when the State Water Board adopted the [Emergency Water Conservation Regulation](#) which requires water suppliers and residents to work together to save water during the drought, primarily through reduced outdoor water use.

Since data collection began in July, more than 105 billion gallons of water have been saved compared to last year – enough to supply 1.37 million California residents for a year. For November, most of the state’s hydrologic regions exhibited the best water conservation numbers since data reporting began.

“In many parts of California, it is clear that residents understand we are in a prolonged drought. And many continue to conserve water, even as we enjoy welcome rain and runoff that is beginning to recharge our reservoirs and groundwater supplies,” said State Water Board Chair Felicia Marcus. “That is good news because it will take far more rain and snow to get us back to normal. Conservation is still the smartest and most cost effective way to deal with this difficult drought. We need to treat water as the precious resource that it is.”

As part of its efforts to institutionalize conservation gains statewide, State Water Board members directed staff to review ideas discussed at a Dec. 17 [water conservation workshop](#) in Los Angeles to see if additional conservation measures suggested by water districts,



environmentalists, and water policy experts should be considered in future rulemaking. The workshop was intended to solicit suggestions on what, if any, additional conservation measures should be adopted in 2015 to increase water conservation statewide.

Water Conservation Efforts Net Water Savings

Year over year monthly residential water savings statewide increased to 9.8 percent in November, from 6.8 percent in October.

While board members were pleased to see improved water conservation in numbers in November, they acknowledged that significant precipitation in some parts of the state, as well as the time of year, could have contributed to less water used – rather than residents consciously conserving water in anticipation of continued drought conditions.

Broken down by hydrologic region, some parts of the state saved more water in November than any month prior since reporting requirements began over the summer.

For example, the Sacramento River hydrologic region decreased water use by 25.6 percent in November compared to the same time in 2013, charting the most savings of any hydrologic region. Sacramento was followed by: Central Coast hydrological region (20.9 percent water use decrease over November 2013); North Coast hydrologic region (19.5 percent water use decrease over November 2013); San Joaquin River hydrologic region (18.6 percent water use decrease over November 2013); and San Francisco Bay hydrologic region (18.3 percent water use decrease over November 2013).

The South Coast hydrologic region mildly improved with 3.2 percent water conservation for November, as compared to October's 1.2 percent. The October and November savings rates for this region are disappointing when compared to the 7.5 percent savings reported for the region in September. With 56 percent of all the residential water customers statewide in the South Coast region, this conservation result significantly affected the November statewide average for residential water savings.

“While the South Coast has been a water conservation leader for several decades, we remain concerned the current drought effort has not translated into more aggressive conservation there,” Marcus said. “That said, we are encouraged by what we have heard from water districts in the South Coast hydrologic region, including LA Mayor Garcetti’s ambitious 20 percent reduction goal, and we expect to see better in 2015.”

Water conservation efforts reached a peak of 11.6 percent of water savings in August, compared with August 2013 water use. Statistically, California urban water use is generally the highest June through October.

The report also found that in November, 93 percent of the water agencies reporting had instituted outdoor water use restrictions. Outdoor water use restrictions are a key requirement for urban water suppliers under the [Emergency Water Conservation Regulation](#) because outdoor watering accounts for as much as 80 percent of urban water use in some areas.

Decline in Per Capita Daily Water Use Continues Statewide

Along with the November conservation data is the residential gallons per-capita per day (R-GPCD) report, which estimates daily water use by residential customers for nearly 400 urban water agencies statewide.

The statewide R-GPCD average for November was 88.9 gallons per person – a significant drop from the September data, which showed statewide average use of 123 gallons per person, per day. The October numbers dropped to 109 gallons per person, per day. State Water Board staff continues to study this trend in an effort to understand what is driving the reduction in water use in some hydrologic regions, but not others. In addition, some of the R-GPCD drop is to be expected as outdoor watering goes down along with the summer temperatures.

The water use reports are a requirement of the Emergency Water Conservation Regulation adopted by the State Water Board in July and are provided to the Board monthly by urban water suppliers, along with total water conservation for each month. The complete report is posted [here](#).

According to the R-GPCD data, water use varies widely by hydrologic region and showed consistent declines in water use during this third month of reporting. At the low end, the North Coast region averaged 59 gallons per person per day. On the high end, the Colorado River region averaged 204 gallons per person per day.

Example of some communities with respective R-GPCD averages in November 2014, versus the same time in 2013, in various hydrologic areas (in parenthesis) include: City of Santa Cruz (Central Coast) with 41 R-GPCD; California - American Water Company Monterey District (Central Coast) with 42 R-GPCD; San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (San Francisco Bay) with 45 R-GPCD; City of Santa Rosa (North Coast) with 49 R-GPCD; City of San Diego (South Coast), with 65 R-GPCD; San Jose Water Company (San Francisco Bay), with 67 R-GPCD; City of Sacramento (Sacramento River) with 74 R-GPCD; City of Stockton (San Joaquin River) with 76 R-GPCD, Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (South Coast), with 77 R-GPCD; City of Fresno (Tulare Lake), with 78 R-GPCD; Sacramento County Water Agency (Sacramento River), with 93 R-GPCD; California Water Services Company, Bakersfield (Tulare Lake) with 97 R-GPCD, and City of Riverside (South Coast), with 102 R-GPCD.

Background

In his Jan. 17, 2014, Emergency Drought Proclamation, Governor Brown called for Californians to voluntarily reduce their water use by 20 percent. The trend of increasing reductions and specific local data shows that many California communities have met and exceeded the call to conserve, but more can and must be done to protect water supplies should the drought persist. Current forecasts indicate that Californians cannot count upon a wet winter to end the drought.

The State Water Board will closely monitor the implementation of the regulations and the weather over the coming months to determine if further restrictions are needed.

The Emergency Water Conservation Regulation will be in effect until April 25, 2015, and will likely be extended if drought conditions persist.

Visit SaveOurWater.com to find out how everyone can do their part, and visit Drought.CA.Gov to learn more about how California is dealing with the effects of the drought.