



*The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California*

# NEWS RELEASE

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Feb. 10, 2009

**AS SOUTHLAND'S 2009 WATER SUPPLY OUTLOOK DETERIORATES,  
METROPOLITAN NEARLY DOUBLES FUNDING FOR CONSERVATION PROGRAMS  
With drought, new environmental regulations restricting supplies from Northern  
California, Metropolitan board approves additional \$20 million for water-saving programs**

With the probability increasing for the first mandatory reductions in imported water supplies throughout Southern California in nearly a generation, Metropolitan Water District's Board of Directors today nearly doubled funding for the agency's conservation and rebate programs to keep pace with burgeoning demands.

Metropolitan's board authorized an additional \$20 million for regional programs offering consumers and businesses rebates for installing water-saving devices and providing financial incentives to public agencies to make conservation investments.

"The unprecedented water supply situation facing Southern California and the rest of the state will not be solved with one or two hearty storms," said Metropolitan board Chairman Timothy F. Brick. "Today, residents and businesses throughout Southern California face a three-in-four chance that they may soon feel the direct impact from drought and problems in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta that demand a comprehensive, sustainable solution. That impact could lead to mandatory conservation in Southern California for the first time since 1991."

Metropolitan General Manager Jeffrey Kightlinger said the region's current supply situation is a combination of critically dry conditions throughout the state as well as recent new environmental regulations.

Complying with a federal court order, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service last December announced new regulations that restrict operations of the State Water Project and federal Central Valley Project to manage and protect a single endangered species, the Delta smelt. Southern California typically relies on state project supplies for up to a third of its total water in a year.

Under the new regulations, Southern California stands to lose as much as 40 percent of its Northern California supplies in average years, Kightlinger said.

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In the face of the new environmental restrictions and California possibly entering the third year of drought, the state Department of Water Resources issued an initial 15 percent allocation to contractors of state project supplies in 2009, including Metropolitan. In the meantime, Metropolitan expects continued reduced deliveries from the Colorado River as that watershed continues to recover from record drought.

“Two years of drought, followed by an extremely dry January and the new regulations greatly increase the likelihood that our board will have to consider reducing supplies to our 26 member public agencies no later than April. That action would lead to mandatory conservation throughout the Southland for the first time in 18 years,” he added.

Kightlinger said the supply challenges and environmental restrictions in the Delta will require the district to develop and acquire new supplies and initiate conservation efforts at significantly higher costs.

To help bridge the gap in Northern California supplies, Metropolitan’s board today also authorized the district to pursue up to 300,000 acre-feet of water through the Governor’s Drought Water Bank in 2009. (An acre-foot of water is nearly 326,000 gallons, about the amount used by five to seven people in a year.)

The increased conservation funding approved today will enhance the district’s existing \$20.1 million budget for water-saving programs that have been depleted because of their success and continued popularity.

“The response to our conservation rebate and incentive programs from consumers, businesses and public agencies has been tremendous, particularly over the past six months,” Kightlinger said. “The success of these conservation programs demonstrates that urban Southern California is prepared to step up and save even more water should mandatory conservation be rolled out this summer.”

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*The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California is a cooperative of 26 cities and water agencies serving 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.*