

Long Beach WATER



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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# **Metropolitan Water District of Southern California Closes Turf Removal Rebate Program**

*Long Beach Water will Continue to Provide \$2.50 Per Square Foot Incentive for Lawn-to-Garden Program*

LONG BEACH, CA – Today, the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California announced that its \$450 million budget for turf removal rebates has been exhausted and will no longer fund turf removal projects. Long Beach Water will continue to provide residential funding at \$2.50 per square foot for its Lawn-to-Garden program, down from the \$3.50 per square foot level that was offered with the help of Metropolitan’s funding. For every \$3.50 per square foot, Metropolitan had subsidized \$2.00.

“Converting landscapes from grass to drought tolerant plants is one of the biggest lifestyle changes a resident can make to save water during this unprecedented drought,” said Harry Saltzgaver, President of the Board of Water Commissioners. “Long Beach will continue to support these important efforts as strongly as we can without the assistance of Metropolitan’s funding.”

“We view the conversion from grass lawns to beautiful, water-conserving landscapes not as a temporary drought response, but as a long-term change which all of California must embrace to respond to the realities of our water supply imbalance,” said Kevin Wattier, General Manager of the Long Beach Water Department. “All of California needs to permanently reduce its water consumption, and landscape conversion is the key to getting there.”

The Lawn-to-Garden program will now give residents \$2.50 per square foot, for up to a thousand square feet, to remove their front lawn and replace their landscape with drought tolerant and California-native plants. Those residents whose applications are already in the Lawn-to-Garden program’s process will still receive the \$3.50 per square foot.

Long Beach Water will fund commercial, industrial and institutional turf replacement and its synthetic turf pilot program at \$1.00 per square foot.

To date, Long Beach has converted 2 million square feet of residential and commercial turf to drought tolerant landscapes.

Funds are still available for water-saving rebate devices, but residents and commercial properties are encouraged to apply for the rebates as soon as possible.

The State Water Resources Control Board has mandated Long Beach to cut its water use by 16 percent cumulatively compared to 2013 through February of next year. Last month, Long Beach reduced water usage by 19 percent compared to June 2013.

Long Beach Water is an urban, Southern California retail water supply agency, and the standard in water conservation and environmental stewardship.

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