



LONG BEACH WATER DEPARTMENT
The Standard in Water Conservation &
Environmental Stewardship

MEDIA RELEASE

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Contact: Ryan J. Alsop
(562) 570-2314
(562) 277-3497
Ryan_alsop@lbwater.org

Long Beach Hits Record Low Water Use in July; 16% Below 10-Year Average City's FY08 water demand nearly 8 percent below 10- year average for water use

LONG BEACH, CA - Today, the [Long Beach Board of Water Commissioners](#) have announced that Long Beach water demand for July 2008 has set a new 10-year record low. It is the 7th record setting month for low water use since the Board of Water Commissioner's declaration of an imminent water supply shortage in September 2007. July 2008 water demand was 16.1 percent below the 10-year average water demand; it was 13 percent below July 2007. Fiscal Year 2008 is tracking 7.7 percent below the 10-year average water use. Last month, the Board of Water Commissioners announced that Long Beach had set a new record low for June 2008, which was 5.7 percent below the lowest June on record over the past 10 years, and was 10.5 percent below the 10-year average water use.

"This is good news, coming at a very good time," according to [Bill Townsend](#), President of the Long Beach Board of Water Commissioners. "Our state's most critical water supply reserves, those that supply water to southern California communities, including Long Beach, will be at their lowest combined level since 1977 in a matter of weeks. Communities throughout southern California must implement mandatory restrictions on the most wasteful outdoor uses of water, and those restrictions need to be made permanent. I want to thank our customers for their huge effort and urge them to continue

On September 13, 2007, the Long Beach Board of Water Commissioners issued a Declaration of Imminent Water Supply Shortage and activated the City's Emergency Water Supply Shortage Plan. As a result, the Board of Water

Commissioners issued mandatory prohibitions on certain outdoor uses of water. "The Board took the action it did nearly one-year ago to forestall and lessen the impact of an expected water supply shortage," according to Townsend. The Board's Declaration was necessitated by the profound impact of permanent reductions to imported water deliveries into southern California, the dramatic reductions in water storage levels in key reservoirs in northern California; and climate conditions resulting in drought. To date, the Long Beach Water Department has issued no water use citations.

On July 25th, the [Board of Water Commissioners](#) unanimously approved an increase in water and sewer rates for FY 2009 a combined 15.8 percent for all Long Beach Water Department customers, subject to a [special public protest hearing](#) to be held on September 18th. The increase will add an additional \$5.39 per month to the typical single family household's water bill, and an additional \$1.30 per month to the typical single family household's sewer bill. The total monthly combined increase for water and sewer service will be \$6.69, or \$80.28 annually.

The increase in water and sewer rates is driven by the sharp increase in the core costs of providing water and sewer service; many of those costs, like [imported water](#) purchases, are unavoidable. In addition to cost increases, the immediate and unavoidable need to reduce consumption of water due to an imminent, prolonged [water supply shortage](#) in California, has resulted in losses in water sales revenue used to fund core services. However, only a small percentage (**2 percent**) of the combined 15.8 percent water & sewer rate increase for FY 2009 will be used to mitigate these revenue losses.

"This rate increase has very little to do with our conservation success over the last 11 months," according to [Kevin L. Wattier](#), General Manager of the Long Beach Water Department. "Our operational costs, like the cost of imported water and electricity, are increasing at a rate greatly in excess of general inflation."

The [Long Beach Water Department](#) is an urban, southern California, retail water supply agency and the standard in water conservation and environmental stewardship.

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