



**Long Beach Water Department**  
The Standard in Water Conservation &  
Environmental Stewardship

**MEDIA RELEASE**

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## Long Beach Water Department Puts Finishing Touches on Nine Long Beach Residential Landscape Makeovers

Free makeovers provide homeowners with beautiful, water-efficient front yards

LONG BEACH, CA – Today, the Long Beach Water Department announced the completion of construction on all nine of its Long Beach residential front-yard landscape makeover projects. The nine homes, one from each of the nine council districts in Long Beach, were the winners of a citywide opportunity drawing last year in which thousands of homeowners participated. The new landscapes, all professionally designed and installed, and with individual budgets of up to \$10,000, were funded by the Long Beach Water Department as part of the department's citywide conservation communications initiative.

"The completion of these water-friendly landscapes couldn't have come at a better time," stated Kevin Wattier, General Manager of the Long Beach Water Department. "We are well into the third year of a statewide drought and our imported water supplies are becoming less reliable by the day. One of the primary goals of our conservation program is to make people more aware of the options available to them to reduce household water consumption. We knew that offering this opportunity to Long Beach residents would provide a unique way for us to raise awareness of the benefits of water-efficient landscaping and would also support and complement the Water Department's on-going efforts to cause a permanent change in the way that people think about and use water," said Wattier.

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 issued mandatory prohibitions on certain outdoor uses of water. The 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 other climate conditions resulting in drought.

According to Matthew Lyons, Director of Planning and Conservation for the Long Beach Water Department, "Our demand for water must be reduced to correct for the permanent reduction in our water supply. One of the best ways to do this is to permanently reduce our landscape irrigation." In Long Beach, landscape typically consumes huge amounts of water - approximately half the water used in the average home goes toward irrigating landscape. "And the best way to permanently reduce landscape irrigation is to replace our grass lawns with beautiful, eco-friendly landscapes," added Lyons.



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The water that can be saved by using drought-tolerant landscaping versus traditional grass landscape is significant. Grass lawns require roughly 80 inches of water per year, compared to only 10 for drought-tolerant plants. Long Beach only receives an average of about 13 inches of rain annually.

Lyons said that in addition to the water-saving benefits of utilizing a drought-tolerant landscape, the new makeovers resulted in unexpected benefits for homeowners. "None of the homeowners have said much about the water their new landscapes save. Instead, they were excited about how beautiful their yards became, the positive comments they have received from neighbors, how little maintenance these landscapes require and how it has given them the opportunity to get to meet their neighbors" said Lyons. Other benefits of using native, water-efficient landscaping include a reduction in the harmful impacts of urban water run-off into our coastal marine habitats, as well as an improvement in our overall quality of life.

The Water Department is using a multifaceted approach to make sure that the results of these projects are widely available to those who want to learn from them. A 30-minute video is currently being produced that will give viewers a more in-depth look at the nine landscape makeover projects. This video will run on local channel LBTv 8 and will also be available on the Water Department's website. The Water Department is also putting together an extensive assortment of photos of each home that were taken before, during and after construction. During the next couple of months, the Water Department will be hosting a number of introductory landscaping classes where residents can learn about installing their own water-efficient landscapes. In the meantime, people interested in learning more about water-friendly plants and landscapes can go to the Water Department's website at [www.lbwater.org](http://www.lbwater.org).

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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