



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

MEDIA RELEASE

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Contact: Matthew R. Veeh
(562) 570-2314
(559) 643-7496
matthew.veeh@lbwater.org

Long Beach Sets New Record for Low Water Use Despite Driest November on Record

Statewide Water Crisis continues to worsen as State Officials set initial allocation for State Water Deliveries at 5% of normal, the lowest ever in the history of the State Water Project

LONG BEACH, CA – The [Long Beach Board of Water Commissioners](#) has announced today that the City of Long Beach has set another 10-year record low for water consumption during the month of November. Citywide water demand during the month of November was 12.5 percent below the city's historical 10-year average. For the past 12-month period, water demand in Long Beach was 17.5 percent below the historical average.

“To set another record low for water use in November is great in and of itself,” said [Paul Blanco, President](#) of the Long Beach Board of Water Commissioners. “But to do so in a month that produced zero rainfall, making it the driest November on record, really demonstrates the outstanding job that our residents and businesses are doing to be responsible users of water,” continued Blanco. “We continue to be impressed by the great lengths that our customers have gone in order to make a permanent lifestyle change to their water use habits.”

The good news for Long Beach comes in the face of another announcement made today by the California Department of Water Resources (DWR), which said that it will set the initial allocation for statewide water deliveries, including the Southern California region, at five percent of normal. This represents the lowest initial allocation ever in the State Water Project's (SWP) 42-year history. A five percent allocation means that California water contractors will only initially receive 208,597 acre-feet of water out of a total of 4,171,996 acre-feet that they requested for the year. State water project allocations often increase during the course of the year, such as last year when an initial allocation of 15% rose to a 40% allocation by the end of the year.

“California is struggling through a water crisis that is not going away anytime soon,” said Kevin Wattier, General Manager for the Long Beach Water Department. “We’re deep into the third straight year of a drought, our state’s critical reservoirs are being quickly depleted, and there are a variety of environmental restrictions that are further impacting our region’s ability to import water from the Delta,” added Wattier.

The State of California recently passed a legislative package that aims to solve California's water problems. A significant part of the package is an \$11.14 Billion water bond that will go before voters in November 2010. The bond would fund projects in the areas of storage, water recycling and conservation, as well as others. If the bond were to fail, it is unknown how effective the other legislation will be at addressing the state's water issues.



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Wattier is confident the solution is simple.

“The only short-term option that we have to address this worsening crisis is to continue to do what Long Beach has been doing so well for the past two years, and that is to continue to conserve water. There are literally no other solutions that can be as quickly and inexpensively implemented as immediate and sustained water conservation,” said Wattier.

Lester A. Snow, DWR Director, holds the same opinion about water conservation as Wattier. In today’s conference call on the initial allocation he suggested that cities should respond to the record low initial allocation by conserving more water, “...starting today!” said Snow.

“The Legislature took a major step forward earlier this month to address the state’s water needs by heeding Governor Schwarzenegger’s call and passing the most comprehensive water package in California history,” said Director Snow. “Nevertheless, on the heels of a three-year drought, we need to prepare now so that we have adequate water supplies for homes, farms and businesses.”

SWP contractors provide water to more than 25 million California residents and more than 750,000 acres of farmland. According to DWR, the historical average of final SWP allocations as a percentage of initial contractor requests over the past 10 years has been 68 percent. Without significant precipitation or other beneficial hydrologic and water supply conditions, this year’s final allocation will likely fall far short of the 68 percent average and possibly below last year’s meager 40 percent allocation.

Long Beach purchases slightly less than half of its water supply from the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, which itself imports roughly half (just under 2,000,000 acre-feet) of the SWP’s total statewide water deliveries. In addition to the imported water that it purchases, the Long Beach Water Department provides its customers with water from other sources such as pumped groundwater and recycled water. Increased conservation allows the Water Department to rely less on imported water, which is the most expensive source of water it currently uses.

[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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