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EBMUD Adopts Drought Management Program

Mandatory rationing goals in effect immediately, drought rates to be voted on July 8

OAKLAND – The East Bay Municipal Utility District Board of Directors voted unanimously Tuesday to immediately implement a Drought Management Program to safeguard its shrinking water supply amidst a second consecutive dry year.

The District received roughly half of its normal runoff this year and projects its water storage will be over 200,000 acre-feet short of the water desired by October 1 of this year (the beginning of a new rain year).

EBMUD is seeking a 15 percent reduction in water use district-wide implementing the drought program and mandatory restrictions on water use now would stretch the dwindling supply further, especially in the event next year is dry as well.

To achieve the 15 percent savings overall, EBMUD is calling for single-family residential customers to cut back by 19 percent; multi-family units, 11 percent; irrigators, 30 percent; commercial, 12 percent; institutional 9 percent; and industrial, 5 percent.

The drought program approved by the Board prohibits the following:

- **using water for decorative ponds, lakes and fountains except those that recycle the water**
- **washing vehicles with hoses that do not contain shutoff nozzles**
- **washing sidewalks, patios and similar hard surfaces**
- **irrigating outdoors on consecutive days or more than three days a week (EBMUD recommends watering in the evening or before dawn)**
- **lawn or garden watering that results in excessive runoff**
- **sewer and hydrant flushing and washing streets with potable (drinking) water supplied by EBMUD except for essential purposes**
- **the use of potable water for construction if alternatives are available**
- **the use of potable water for soil compaction and dust control when another source is available**

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The Board also discussed the implementation of drought rates, which will be considered for approval at its July 8 meeting and public hearing.

Under that proposal, water volume charges for most EBMUD single family residential water customers increase by 10 percent. These customers will be asked to cut their water use by 19 percent (based on the average of their last three years of water bills). Customers who achieve this goal will see a reduction in their overall water bill. But those who still use more than 90 percent of their allotted water budget will face a \$2 surcharge for each unit of water they consume beyond that threshold.

One unit of water is 748 gallons.

Customers who use small amounts of water, less than 100 gallons a day, would be exempt from the 10 percent volume increase and the surcharge.

Surcharges and increases will take effect for other customer groups as well on August 1, if the proposed rate plan is approved by the Board.

EBMUD will reach out to all of its customers through advertising, community, civic and government meetings, in addition to mass media news messages to advise customers on how to achieve these savings, including publicizing the many rebate programs the District offers. The District's website www.ebmud.com will be continuously updated.

“This is a serious challenge for all of us,” said Dennis Diemer, EBMUD general manager, “but the District is prepared to meet it and we know from past history our customers are more than ready as well.”

EBMUD has a proud history of providing high-quality drinking water for 1.3 million customers in Alameda and Contra Costa counties. The District's award-winning wastewater treatment protects San Francisco Bay and serves 640,000 customers.

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