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NEWSLETTER

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2009 LEGISLATIVE WATER PACKAGE

The California Legislature passed a far-reaching legislative package on water on November 4, 2009. The “2009 Comprehensive Water Package” also known as the Safe, Clean, and Reliable Drinking Water Supply Act of 2010, now signed into law by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger aims to improve water supply reliability and restore the Delta ecosystem and includes an \$11.14 billion water bond measure for California voters to consider in November 2010. A summary by the California Department of Water Resources title Special Session Policy Bills and Bond Summary can be viewed here:

<http://www.water.ca.gov/news/newsreleases/2009/11092009waterpackagefactsheets.pdf>

CALIFORNIA WATER PLAN UPDATE 2009

The California Water Code requires the Department of Water Resources to publish an update of the California Water Plan every five years. Bulletin 160-05 is the latest in a series of Water Plan updates. The Bulletin 160 series evaluates water supplies and assesses agricultural, urban, and environmental water uses to quantify the gap between water supplies and uses. The “Pre-Final” Draft is now available online. The Final Update 2009 is expected in February 2010 after it is approved by the Governor.

<http://www.waterplan.water.ca.gov/cwpu2009/index.cfm>

WATER SUPPLY UPDATE

On December 30, 2009, the Department of Water Resources first snow survey of the 2009/2010 winter season indicates that overall snow water content is 85 percent of normal for the date. This time last year, snow water content was 76 percent of normal statewide. The Central Valley Project (CVP) begins 2010 with about 4.4 million acre-feet of water in storage, equal to 39 percent of capacity in five key CVP reservoirs: Shasta, New Melones, Trinity, Folsom and the federal portion of San Luis Reservoir. The Bureau of Reclamation is expected to announce the initial water supply allocation for CVP contractors, including Bella Vista Water District, in mid-February. Following are resources for updated drought conditions and water supply information.

California Drought Update - December 2009:

http://www.water.ca.gov/drought/docs/dec09_drought_report.pdf

Updated Conditions for Major Reservoirs:

<http://cdec.water.ca.gov/cdecapp/resapp/getResGraphsMain.action>

While the hydrologic drought now exceeding three years has been obvious and publicized, the cumulative and chronic impacts resulting from regulatory and court-ordered restrictions have been less publicized but continues to dramatically reduce the yield of the federal Central Valley Project and reliability of the District’s water supply. Recent biological opinions call for revised minimum storage in Shasta and additional releases in the fall and spring. These requirements are layered on top of existing impacts resulting from the implementation of a variety of federal statutes including the Endangered Species Act, the Central Valley Project Improvement Act, and Clean Water Act on a system that hasn’t seen any major improvements or expansion in decades despite significantly increased demands and population.

WATER SHORTAGE MEASURES REMAIN

Initially, on May 12, 2008, the Board of Directors declared a water shortage emergency and enacted its Water Shortage Contingency Plan due to a greatly reduced water supply from the Central Valley Project. These measures were subsequently revised based on changing water supply conditions, most recently in May 2009 with the adoption of Resolution 09-06 which remains in effect and can be summarized as follows:

- A. Beginning June 1, 2009, all District Rural, Residential, Commercial and Public Institutional customers shall be charged a drought surcharge of \$0.26 per hundred cubic foot (HCF) for all water usage above eighty percent (80%) of the amount used by that customer during the same bimonthly period during the base year (March 1, 2007 through February 28, 2008).
- B. Beginning May 1, 2009, all District Agricultural and Aquacultural customers shall be charged a drought surcharge of \$144.00 per acre-foot for all water usage above eighty percent (80%) of the cumulative amount used by that customer during the base year (March 1, 2007 through February 28, 2008).

Additionally, the District encourages its customers to:

- Adjust sprinklers and irrigation systems to avoid overspray, runoff and waste;
- Avoid watering lawns in the hottest part of the day (i.e., between 9 a.m. and 7 p.m.) and on windy days;
- Install new drought tolerant landscaping, and efficient irrigation systems;
- Not hose down driveways, sidewalks and other paved surfaces, except when necessary for health or sanitary reasons;
- Install pool and spa covers to minimize water loss due to evaporation;
- Not allow the hose to run while washing any vehicle and to use a bucket or a hose with an automatic shutoff valve;
- Retrofit indoor plumbing fixtures with low-flow devices; and
- Check faucets, toilets and pipes, both indoor and outdoor, including house service laterals and sprinkler piping, for leaks and repair them immediately, or upon demand of the District.

A copy of the adopted Shortage Measures (Resolution 09-06) is available here:

<http://www.bvwd.org/pdf/res-09-06.pdf>

CROSS CONNECTION CONTROL PROGRAM

District personnel will begin annual testing of customer's backflow devices beginning in January. Customers with backflow devices include commercial accounts and connections that represent a risk to the potable supply. Backflow is the unwanted reversal of flow through either back pressure or back siphonage into the public water supply. These conditions may be caused by elevation changes, surges, and pressure differentials generated by booster and injection pumps on an irrigation system. Back-siphonage may occur from pressure differentials caused by reduced pressure or vacuum conditions within the potable water system when a supply line break occurs creating an excessive demand. A backflow device installed immediately downstream of the water meter protects the public water system by preventing reverse flow and is required for connections that represent a risk to the potable supply.

Chemigation is the practice of injecting a chemical into irrigation water for delivery through the irrigation system to the crop or field. This practice is an efficient and effective method to apply agricultural chemicals (e.g. fertilizers, pesticides, fungicides) and has become a common practice. However, chemigation represents a high risk to the public water system and is strictly prohibited by the District unless a proper backflow prevention device is installed! Please contact the District office if you are planning to inject any chemicals into your irrigation system so that we can assist you in complying with the backflow requirements, preventing any potential contamination of the public water system, and ensuring public health and safety. A Cross-Connection Fact Sheet is available on the District web site:

<http://www.bvwd.org/pdf/fact-sheets/Cross-Connection-Control-Program.pdf>