



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 29, 2021

SFPUC Calling for 10 Percent Voluntary Irrigation Reduction As Dry Conditions Continue in California

Measure will bolster agency's existing conservation and water reuse efforts

San Francisco, CA – With dry weather conditions continuing to persist throughout California, the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission is asking for a 10 percent voluntary reduction in use from its irrigation customers and a similar request for City departments, while reminding San Franciscans to maintain efficient use and avoid water waste indoors and outside.

"This year is the second dry year in a row for the State of California and we must do what we can to make the most of our water supplies in case this trend continues," said Mayor London N. Breed. "Thanks to our innovative water policies and strong management, San Francisco is at the forefront of conserving water, but we have to look ahead. The steps we take now to use our water wisely will help us become more resilient and make it through future dry years."

San Franciscans consume an average of 42 gallons of water per day, one of the lowest rates in California and half the state average. Currently, the SFPUC's reservoirs are at 76.8 percent of maximum storage capacity, which is slightly lower than the historical averages of 81 percent at this time of year.

By relying on multiple sources of water supply, the SFPUC protects its customers from potential disruptions in water supply from emergencies, natural disasters and extended drought periods. The SFPUC is mindful about being good stewards of the resources in its care and using our current supplies as efficiently as possible.

"We are fortunate to have multiple sources of water supply, which makes our system more resilient in dry years," said SFPUC Acting General Manager Michael Carlin. "However, we do not know how long this dry weather will last. We also want to be supportive of our communities as we recover from the devastating effects of this pandemic. Therefore, we are asking for small changes for irrigation customers that can make a big difference in stretching our water supply."

The SFPUC is taking measures now like the voluntary 10 percent reduction for its roughly 1,600 irrigation customers and for its City departments to ensure that the water in the agency's reservoirs and groundwater basins lasts through this dry period. The agency continues to work with its retail customers to provide resources and tips on best conservation practices.

The agency offers many resources to encourage efficient water use for customers. These include free onsite irrigation checkups and landscape evaluations, grants, and leak alerts. The SFPUC also offers extensive indoor water-saving assistance, including free replacement of old toilets, rebates for efficient clothes washers and other equipment, and home and business conservation consultations. For more information, residents can visit www.sfpuc.org/savewater

SFPUC customers who register to pay their bills online through MyAccount also can track their water use on a daily or even hourly level to detect water waste. Registration is available at myaccount.sfwater.org/

Additionally, the SFPUC's innovative [Leak Alert Program](#) sends automated notifications to single-family homes, multi-family properties, commercial and irrigation accounts with nonstop water use for three-plus days, which indicates that there might be a plumbing leak.

Along with those consumer-focused measures, the SFPUC has been a national leader on water reuse and recycling efforts. Since first supporting a [citywide ordinance](#) in 2012, the SFPUC has become a pioneer in onsite water reuse programs, which allow for the collection, treatment, and use of alternate water sources for non-potable applications in individual buildings.

The SFPUC is expanding its water recycling programs, which reuse water for non-drinking purposes such as landscape irrigation, toilet flushing and street cleaning. Despite the pandemic, construction continues on the Westside Enhanced Water Recycling Project, a critical undertaking that is set to be completed in 2022.

The SFPUC provides drinking water to 2.7 million people throughout the Bay Area. The water comes from a combination of sources, including the Hetch Hetchy Reservoir in Yosemite and five reservoirs in the Bay Area. Additionally, since 2017, the SFPUC has been adding groundwater into its blend of sources.

The agency is engaged in an Alternative Supply Planning Program to evaluate all potential sources of future water supply and begin the work of bringing some of those sources online so they may be available in the coming decades. As part of that study, the SFPUC is looking at the feasibility of eight Bay Area and three Sierra Nevada area projects, the majority of which will require partnerships with multiple other entities to accomplish. It is also evaluating three projects within San Francisco.

About the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission

The San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC) is a department of the City and County of San Francisco. It delivers drinking water to 2.7 million people in the San Francisco Bay Area, collects and treats wastewater for the City and County of San Francisco, and generates clean power for municipal buildings, residential customers, and businesses. Our mission is to provide our customers with high quality, efficient and reliable water, power, and sewer services in a manner that values environmental and community interests and sustains the resources entrusted to our care. Learn more at www.sfpuc.org