



saveourH2O.org

News for Immediate Release

4/21/09

Media contacts:

- Amy Norris, Public Information Officer, Department of Water Resources 916-654-3755
- Jennifer Persike, Association of California Water Agencies, 916-441-4545

## **NEW STATEWIDE WATER CONSERVATION PROGRAM LAUNCHED**

*Partnership between state and locals aims to reduce use, educate public*

Sacramento, CA— California leaders today launched a new statewide public education program challenging individuals to do their part to “Save Our Water.” The program will educate Californians about the state’s ongoing water supply challenges and promote conservation through public service announcements, educational outreach, and a comprehensive Web site.

“Water is an essential part of our life here in California, but we are facing severe challenges that threaten our economy and our environment,” said California Secretary for Natural Resources Mike Chrisman. “The ‘Save Our Water’ program will encourage Californians to increase water conservation by doing easy things every day and will help protect against the uncertainties of drought and climate change.”

Chrisman announced the new program at a news conference alongside Department of Water Resources (DWR) Director Lester Snow and Association of California Water Agencies (ACWA) Executive Director Timothy Quinn.

“As we work to develop long-term solutions, each of us must get serious about water conservation,” said DWR Director Lester Snow. “We should not assume we will be out of this drought next year, which is why I hope all Californians will join in this important effort to ‘Save Our Water.’”

Californians are being asked to take simple steps to save water, including:

- Take shorter showers.
- Don’t leave water running.

- Check for leaks.
- Wash only full laundry loads.
- Water only when your landscaping needs it and only in the early morning hours.
- Use a broom instead of the hose to clean driveways and walkways.

The “Save Our Water” program was developed in partnership with DWR and the ACWA to educate Californians about why water conservation must become a regular part of our everyday lives. The program is a statewide multi-faceted public education effort that will use Web-based outreach and paid advertising to show residents easy ways to reduce water use every day. The program will also offer consumer-oriented information and tips to increase awareness and understanding of the complex issues facing the state’s water delivery and supply system.

“We want to encourage Californians to really change their thinking about water use,” said Quinn. “Conserving water should become a daily habit with Californians, just as saving energy and recycling has become.”

Three years of drought and ongoing environmental problems have created severe water challenges for California. Water supplies for many cities, farms and businesses are being significantly reduced due to the ongoing drought, environmental restrictions to protect fish species, and a lack of investment in the state’s water storage and delivery system. Climate change is further compounding the problem.

In February 2009, Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger proclaimed a statewide emergency due to drought conditions, and called for a water conservation program to help Californians immediately begin to save water. State and local water managers are working now on long-term solutions, but conservation is one thing Californians can do today to stretch supplies and improve the situation.

DWR also announced during the news conference that \$240 million in bond funding is being released for water conservation, drought assistance and Integrated Regional Water Management programs. The money was released by the Pooled Money Investment Board following the successful sale of California infrastructure bonds in March.

“The projects funded by this new infusion of bond funds will allow communities to diversify their water supply portfolios and implement their own complementary water conservation programs,” said Snow. “Regional investment in projects such as waste water recycling and water conservation is a major piece of the Governor’s comprehensive water strategy, which also includes fixing Delta conveyance, ecosystem restoration, and additional storage.”

To view a list of projects receiving released bond funding, visit the Department of Finance’s Web site,  
[http://www.dof.ca.gov/capital\\_outlay/funding\\_released/documents/detail\\_newprojects\\_restarted\\_new.pdf](http://www.dof.ca.gov/capital_outlay/funding_released/documents/detail_newprojects_restarted_new.pdf)

Drought Background

A series of storms in early 2009 boosted snowpack and reservoir levels, but not enough to make up for two previous dry years. Water storage in California's main reservoirs – a key ingredient in defining drought conditions – remains well below normal. Experts say 2007-2009 now ranks in the top 10 driest three-year periods in the last century.

Agricultural communities have been hit particularly hard as a result of the current drought and environmental problems. Revenue losses to Central Valley farmers have been projected to total more than \$400 million in 2009, with 16,000 to 23,000 jobs lost. Fallowing crops also results in higher prices at the supermarket for all consumers.

Conservation will help California weather the situation, but saving water needs to be a way of life for Californians to avoid or lessen future water shortage. Conservation is an important part of solving the state's water problems, but it is only part of the answer. A comprehensive approach is needed. Such a plan will include new surface and groundwater storage to capture water when it is available; alternate conveyance to ensure reliable supply while protecting the environment; integrated regional water management strategies to develop water supply locally; and research and development of alternate sources such as desalinization and recycling.

For more information about the Save Our Water program, conservation tips and drought and water shortage information, visit [www.saveourH2O.org](http://www.saveourH2O.org)

*The Department of Water Resources operates and maintains the State Water Project, provides dam safety and flood control and inspection services, assists local water districts in water management and water conservation planning, and plans for future statewide water needs.*

*ACWA is a statewide association of public agencies whose 450 members are responsible for about 90% of the water delivered in California. For more information, visit [www.acwa.com](http://www.acwa.com).*

###