

## TO ALL WATER SYSTEMS

Restrictions on the State Project operations, below average participation and ground water recharge year, together with an unseasonably dry spring may all contribute to a limited the yield from your ground and/or surface water supply sources. As a result you could experience difficulties in meeting normal system demands resulting in water shortages or low pressure during peak demand periods, such as those that normally occur in the late summer and early fall months.

Therefore, it is important that you closely evaluate your water supply situation and develop a contingency plan designed to mitigate any water supply problems that you may experience due to the current conditions. The following elements should be included in evaluating your system and in developing a drought contingency plan:

1. An accurate determination of the system source capacity, including ground water levels, well yields, well pumping capacities and pump bowl settings (depth to the pump's intake). The information you will need should include the following:
  - a. The depth to ground water in your wells under both pumping and non-pumping conditions: Information on the depth to ground water is a very good indicator of well capacity. Too often, water systems do not collect information on ground water depth and instead rely solely on the well's pumping capacity. As such, these systems may not be aware of impending problems due to a depletion of the ground water table over time. Systems that do not monitor the groundwater levels over their pump bowls also run the chance of ruining good pumping equipment if excessive draw down in the groundwater table results in air entering the pumping equipment. **Should water levels drop below you pump bowl settings, significant damage to pump impellers, bearings and motors is likely to result! This could result in your system being without water until a new pump can be installed and result in significant equipment and labor costs to replace "burned-out" pumps and motors!**
  - b. Well pumping capacity: If your well(s) are not currently metered, we strongly recommend that you install a totalizing flow meter as soon as possible and read and record this data on a regular basis. This can help you monitor usage and identify your degree of water loss or "unaccounted for water". Unaccounted for water is the difference between the water you produce from your sources and the amount actually delivered to customers.
  - c. Record the water levels in the system storage tanks during the various high demand periods of the day: We recommend that you monitor and record the level of the water in your storage tanks at the same time each day.

This will help you identify increasing system demand or reduced source capacity conditions that can lead to major supply problems.

- d. Repair any obvious leaks in your storage tanks and distribution system, before summer arrives! If your distribution system is over 25 years in age, consider starting a leak detection program to identify and repair leaks in your distribution system that may not be obvious, particularly unaccounted for water losses. Water that is not wasted through un-repaired leaks is water that will be available to customers when it is needed and saves the system money by lowering power consumption to pump water that is being wasted.
2. Review your past water use data during summer months and anticipated demands this summer and plan appropriately for anticipated shortages.
3. The contingency plan suggested above should as a minimum include:
  - a. Serious water conservation measures that will help mitigate water shortage problems: If water shortages were experienced in your system last year and additional source capacity has not been brought on-line, it is imperative that conservation efforts begin immediately. Outside watering and other non-essential water use should be curtailed or restricted. Appended to this letter is an excerpt from the California Water Code, which outlines measures that can and should be taken by a utility facing water shortage problems.
  - b. A temporary or permanent interconnection to a neighboring utility that has excess production capacity: Such an interconnection should be discussed with the Department before the interconnection is made.
  - c. The development and use of emergency sources of supply with conditional approval from our Department: The ability to use surface water from a canal, lake or stream through portable treatment facilities must be evaluated. If adequate treatment cannot be provided, our Department must be contacted to help develop appropriate mitigation measures. In some cases unsafe water sources may be used provided that proper notification to all users is given advising them of the water quality being delivered and steps they can take to address the current water supply and water quality situation. This may include need to use bottled water or to adequately boil their water before drinking.

It is important that even those systems using groundwater wells that have never experienced an outage, take steps to verify water table depth and well pump settings as indicated above. If you believe your utility will be facing water shortage problems, we recommend that you issue a “Declaration of Water Shortage Emergency”, as outlined in the Water Code and notify our Department of your Contingency Plan. In the event that

your system experiences a significant and prolonged water outage, you will need to contact your local County Office of Emergency Services for assistance. Assistance from either the State or Federal Emergency Services Offices can only be provided after the local Emergency Services' resources have been expended.

If you have any questions regarding this letter, please contact our office at (xxx) xxx-xxxx.

Sincerely,

District Engineer: