



The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California

NEWS RELEASE

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METROPOLITAN AIMS TO INCREASE CONSERVATION IN DISADVANTAGED COMMUNITIES THROUGH NEW PILOT PROGRAM

The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California is increasing its rebate for high-efficiency toilets installed in qualifying apartments, with the goal of replacing 10,000 toilets and significantly increasing water conservation in the region's disadvantaged communities.

Metropolitan's Board of Directors Tuesday (Dec. 11) approved \$3 million for an 18-month pilot program to boost the rebate from \$40 to \$250 for high-efficiency models. The board also approved an additional \$1.5 million in funding for member agencies to develop local programs aimed at sparking water savings in low-income communities.

"Conservation and water use efficiency plays a key role in our water reliability, which is why we're continually looking for innovative ways to help Southern California save water," Metropolitan board Chairman Randy Record said. "This pilot program will allow us to test a new approach to increasing access to conservation programs within our large and diverse service area. Our hope is that the result will be a meaningful increase in overall regional water savings."

Disadvantaged communities represent about half of Metropolitan's Southern California service area, which spans 5,200 square miles and parts of six Southland counties. Low-income residents may lack the resources to take advantage of rebates for high-efficiency appliances that can require large, up-front purchases. They also may live in apartments and other multi-family buildings without yards, limiting their participation in outdoor programs such as Metropolitan's landscape transformation program or rebates for smart irrigation controllers.

Over the next 20 years, the upgraded toilets are expected to save an estimated 2,100 acre-feet of water. An acre-foot is about 326,000 gallons, about the amount used by three typical Southland households in a year.

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General Manager Jeffrey Kightlinger said the pilot program allows for the installation of high-efficiency toilets that replace older, high water-using toilets in multi-family housing built before 1994. Offering the much larger rebate could spur interest by third-party contractors to work with property owners to install toilets across an entire building or complex, he said.

“Metropolitan worked closely with our member agencies to identify barriers to participating in our conservation programs and we used this valuable feedback in crafting this strategic approach,” Kightlinger said. “We look forward to the results of this pilot program so that we can identify where we need to go next.”

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The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California is a state-established cooperative that, along with its 26 cities and retail suppliers, provide water for nearly 19 million people in six counties. The district imports water from the Colorado River and Northern California to supplement local supplies, and helps its members to develop increased water conservation, recycling, storage and other resource-management programs.