



*The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California*

# NEWS RELEASE

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## **SOUTHLAND'S IMPORTED WATER SUPPLIES REMAIN HINDERED IN 2010, REGARDLESS OF RECENT STORMS**

### **Problems in Delta continue to hamper water availability throughout state**

Even with the powerful storms that have swept through the state, Southern California continues to face significant supply challenges in 2010 and beyond, regional water managers cautioned today.

"These storms may have left many consumers with the misperception that the region's water supply problems are over. Nothing, however, could be further from the truth," said Jeffrey Kightlinger, general manager of the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California.

Metropolitan's main sources of imported supplies, particularly deliveries from Northern California through the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, remain hindered by limitations, Kightlinger said. He pointed to the state Department of Water Resources record-low allocation of 5 percent of State Water Project supplies to Southern California and other areas of the state.

"Although that allocation may be adjusted soon, the Southland and other parts of California must continue to deal with continued shortages because of the effects of three years of statewide drought and the Delta's deteriorating environmental conditions," Kightlinger said.

"While a low initial state project allocation was anticipated, it still sends a serious message up and down California of what agencies throughout the state must be prepared to deal with for years to come while the ultimate Delta fix is undertaken. This new era of limitations isn't quickly going away," he added.

In April, Metropolitan's Board of Directors will decide the extent of mandatory conservation for the year, when much of the wet season is concluded and when the district has a better handle on available supplies for 2010.

Debra C. Man, Metropolitan assistant general manager and chief operating officer, noted that in the past Southern California relied on wet winters to replenish its water reserves. During droughts, when new supplies were scarce, the region could draw on the reserves to help cushion the supply impacts.

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“In a wet-or-dry state like California, capitalizing on a big winter was a key to reliability. But winter storms no longer translate into nearly the improvement in California’s water supply picture because of the current unprecedented restrictions in the Delta,” Man said.

The restrictions have been compounded by three years of drought. Today, Man said the state faces perpetual water shortages for millions of acres of agriculture and 25 million Californians, from the Bay Area to Southern California.

About 30 percent of Southern California’s overall water supply comes across the Delta and is delivered to Metropolitan through the state water system. In wetter winters, Metropolitan and its member public agencies depend on these supplies to replenish reservoirs and groundwater basins throughout Southern California.

“A few years ago, we could expect to replenish our water storage system with Delta supplies in roughly seven out of 10 years. That’s no longer the case because of restrictions in the Delta,” Man said. As an example, Man observed that Diamond Valley Lake, Metropolitan’s largest water storage reservoir near Hemet in southwest Riverside County, remains less than half full.

As populations of endangered fish species such as the Delta smelt declined, court rulings and federal regulations began to restrict the deliveries of water supplies. In average and wet years, the impacts of the restrictions are greater. Nearly 200 billion gallons of potential water supplies will not be captured and stored due to these restrictions, even in a wet year, Man said.

In the face of these seemingly perpetual supply challenges, she said consumers and businesses must continue to use water as wisely and efficiently as possible.

“If they haven’t done so already, residents should shut off their automatic sprinkler systems, particularly when it rains. They should give their lawns and gardens, which have been saturated during the recent deluge, a break and save precious water,” Man said.

For more water-saving tips, residents and businesses can visit “[www.bewaterwise.com](http://www.bewaterwise.com)”

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*The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California is a cooperative of 26 cities and water agencies serving 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.*