



Why Are We Prepared for This Drought? Because of You.

By: Gloria D. Gray, Metropolitan Board Chairwoman

As Southern California heads into another cycle of drought, we have never been better prepared. The amount of water Metropolitan has in reserve – in groundwater banks and reservoirs throughout the state and even Nevada – has never been greater.

Metropolitan could take the credit. Yes, we have the system to store this water. And we have stored it. But in truth, you deserve the credit. Southern California residents and businesses have kept on conserving year after year since the last drought. Had you not, today's situation would be dramatically different.

Some recent history.

This year feels eerily similar to that of 2014. The Sierra snowpack was one of the smallest in history. And our supply from Northern California, via the State Water Project, was 5 percent of a full allocation – the smallest since the system went on line in the 1970s. Absent a dramatic and wet change in our weather, this year's allocation of State Water Project supplies will be 5 percent again.

Back then, our challenges were not over in 2014. The next year was dry again – not as dry, but many of the state's reservoirs had been depleted from the previous year. Two dry years in a row challenge the statewide system. So then-Governor Jerry Brown ordered all urban

residents in California to reduce their water use by 25 percent. Some local communities at the time were in better shape than others. It didn't matter. It was time for statewide action.

At Metropolitan, we asked all of our Member Agencies to reduce their use of our supplies by 15 percent. We don't physically limit deliveries to our member agencies. We use pricing, through our Allocation Plan, to lower demands on our supplies and meet the targets.

From the governor's call to conserve to all the local efforts, it worked. Southern California reduced its water use by 25 percent in 2015, and then some.

In 2016, California was blessed with rain. The drought ended.

You could have used water – indoors and outdoors – like you had before.

But you did not.

You kept on conserving. Your water use has barely nudged upward.

Had you not embraced conservation as a way of life here in California, had you returned to your previous water habits, demands on Metropolitan would have dramatically increased. Had that happened between the last drought and this one, we would not have been able to amass the water we now have in reserve. We would have had to deliver supplies each and every year. But you lowered your demand. We were able to keep supplies in reserve. And now, together, we are in a very strong position to enter a drought cycle that may not be over this year.

Nobody thanks you each and every day for using less water, for treating it as the precious resource that it is. Entering this drought, you deserve credit for the strong position Southern California is in. I thank you.