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METROPOLITAN WATER
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OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

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LVMWD Scales Back Watering Restrictions Due to Improved Hydrologic Conditions

The move comes after intense storms improved reservoir and snowpack conditions throughout the state.

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For Immediate Release

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Calabasas, CA – The LVMWD Board voted unanimously to scale back watering restrictions at its meeting on Feb. 7 due to improved hydrologic conditions and increased water allocation from the State.

The California Department of Water Resources increased its State Water Project (SWP) allocation from 5% to 30% due to the atmospheric rivers that have pummeled the state so far this winter. SWP reservoirs have filled up significantly, the snowpack in the Sierra Nevada Mountains is deep, and La Niña conditions are fading – together providing a much-needed break from the historic drought emergency.

As a result of the improvement in water supply, LVMWD will move back to Stage 2 of its Water Shortage Contingency Plan (WSCP). The District has been in Stage 3 for a little over a year. Under Stage 3, the district-wide target for reduction in water use was 35%, which was achieved by customers.

The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California has yet to remove its drought emergency restrictions for SWP-dependent area agencies like LVMWD, including the one-day-per-week irrigation limit. LVMWD customers are expected to continue abiding by that requirement until further notice.

“Unpredictable weather patterns are causing uncertainty when forecasting temperature and wet weather patterns,” said Jay Lewitt, LVMWD board president. We continue to suggest that you transform your thirsty lawns into natural native landscapes. Our community has done a tremendous job throughout this drought and the key continues to be using less water.”

At Stage 2 of the WSCP, customers are asked to continue their incredible job of conserving by using water efficiently for outdoor irrigation. LVMWD customers have averaged a 40% overall decrease in water usage over the past six months, compared to the same time period in 2020. This level of conservation was historic and effective in preventing the need for an altogether ban on outdoor watering. Current hydrologic conditions warrant a softening of the measures in place to achieve those reductions.

Under Stage 2, the new District-wide target for reduction in water use, as compared to 2020, is 20%. This does not mean that each customer needs to reduce their individual water use by 20%. The amount of reduction from each customer depends on how water-efficient they were in 2020. Customers who were already highly efficient with water use may not need to reduce at all, but customers who exceeded their water budgets and used excessive amounts of water will need to reduce even more. Generally speaking, if a customer stays within their water budget, they are going to be doing their part to help the District achieve the 20% reduction target for 2023.

Drought factors will no longer be applied to customers' water budgets under Stage 2, which means the budgeted amounts will increase to the levels prior to the drought emergency. Also, the District will not be installing flow restriction devices, but will consider their use in the future for customers who repeatedly and egregiously exceed their water budgets by a considerable amount.

Since 70% of all residential water usage is for outdoor irrigation, this continues to be the best area of focus for reducing water consumption. Customers have the opportunity to reimagine what is aesthetically pleasing for their homes, as non-functional turf grass is becoming a thing of the past in Southern California. Climate appropriate landscaping provides beauty, a home for pollinators, and significantly minimizes residential water usage.

LVMWD customers are encouraged to create a free [WaterSmart](#) account to track their water usage in near real time. This service allows customers to better manage their water usage and take more “agency” or responsibility when deciding how and when to use water.

“Our customers have done a tremendous job of adjusting their water usage over the past year and a half to respond to the drought emergency,” said David Pedersen, general manager for LVMWD. “We are forever grateful and thankful for the historic response of our customers. Looking ahead, it is important to recognize that the drought is not over, and we need to be prepared for an uncertain future. We ask that everyone continue to be efficient with their water usage, change their relationship with water and consider transforming their outdoor living spaces using climate appropriate landscaping.”

While wet and dry years are commonplace in California, climate change has increased the intensity and frequency of these periods, resulting in drier and hotter conditions, and longer timeframes between precipitation events.

Mother nature has given us the opportunity to collectively catch our breath. By continuing to conserve and making water use efficiency a California Way of Life, we will be better prepared for the next dry period.

For the latest information on LVMWD and programs for the communities we serve please visit [LVMWD.com](#).

Las Virgenes Municipal Water District provides potable water, wastewater treatment, recycled water and biosolids composting to more than 75,000 residents in the cities of Agoura Hills, Calabasas, Hidden Hills, Westlake Village, and unincorporated areas of western Los Angeles County.