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For Immediate Release:

MYTH BUSTER: CALIFORNIA WATER CONSERVATION LAWS

Response for New Laws Focused on Water Use Efficiency

Walnut, CA (January 2, 2020) - State legislation signed by Governor Jerry Brown to transform California's approach to conserving water is currently receiving large scale media attention due to misinformation. Below is a summary of the new water use efficiency laws and how it may relate to customers.

Assembly Bill (AB) 1668 and Senate Bill (SB) 606

On May 31, 2018, Governor Brown signed two bills, SB 606 (Hertzberg, D-Van Nuys) and AB 1668 (Friedman, D-Glendale) to continue efforts that make water conservation a way of life in California. It does not impose individual mandates for homeowners or businesses. The mandates fall on water suppliers – not customers.

The Department of Water Resources was tasked with the following by January 1, 2020:

- Coordinate with the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) to identify small water suppliers and rural communities that may be at risk of drought and water shortage vulnerability.
- Consult with the SWRCB to propose recommendations and guidance to, now Governor Newsom, and the Legislature relating to the development and implementation of countywide drought and water shortage contingency plans to address the planning needs of small water suppliers and rural communities.
- Coordinate with the SWRCB to recommend to the Legislature the feasibility of developing and enacting water loss reporting requirements for urban wholesale water suppliers.

A full list of SB 606 and AB 1668 implementation deadlines can be found on WVWD's website.

Local water agencies will be responsible for calculating their water-use objective and determining whether their systemwide, aggregate water use meets that objective. If necessary, they will also have flexibility in how best to help customers use water more efficiently, such as conservation rebates and educational programs. Starting in 2027, the SWRCB could issue fines of \$1,000 per day during non-drought years and \$10,000 per day during declared drought emergencies and certain dry years to local water agencies that have not meet their water-use objectives. These fines would be levied on agencies, not individuals.

SB 606 and AB 1668 strengthen the state's water resiliency in the face of future droughts with provisions that include water use objectives and long-term standards for increased water use efficiency, incentives for water suppliers to recycle water, increased drought planning, and more.

Water agencies must calculate their system-wide, water-use objectives by November 2023 based on the following components:

- Water Efficiency Standards for Indoor Water Use - this will be based on a provisional standard of 55 gallons of water a day per person served by the water agency.
- Outdoor Water Use - this standard is still being determined but will account for local climate and irrigable acres.
- Commercial, industrial and institutional landscape irrigation.
- Water loss (system leaks)
- Unique local circumstances
- Credit for recycled water use

Below are myth-busting facts on California's long-term water efficiency legislation:

Myth: Water quotas for indoor and outdoor use are now in place for individual users with heavy fines attached to violations.

Fact: State agencies and local water suppliers have been given guidelines regarding indoor and outdoor water use to meet a maximum usage quota as set forth in SB 606.

- The standard of 55 gallons per person per day for indoor residential water use is not intended as an enforceable standard for individuals. It is one of several elements used to calculate the overall efficiency standard for a service area.
- Individuals will not be responsible for the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) fines. Instead, the SWRCB can fine water agencies up to \$10,000 per day if the agency does not meet its cumulative standard.

Myth: Individuals are being tasked with tracking and enforcing their own water conservation targets and are restricted from showering and doing laundry on the same day.

Fact: There is no law against showering and doing laundry on the same day. There are no specific statewide laws that require individual households to meet any specific targets. The targets will be set for an entire service area and are scheduled to go into effect in 2023.

For more information regarding state and federal legislation visit www.wvwd.com.

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About Walnut Valley Water District

Walnut Valley Water District was formed in 1952, and after more than six decades of service to the community, the District operates and maintains two large imported water pipelines, 497 miles of distribution mains, 17 pump plants, and 31 reservoirs with a storage capacity of 94.1 million gallons of water. The District also provides water service to more than 27,000 connections in an area encompassing 17,900 acres, serving a population of more than 100,000 residents and businesses in six local communities.