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**WATER LIMITED IN SAN DIEGO, SOUTHWEST RIVERSIDE COUNTIES
DURING CONSTRUCTION WORK AT SKINNER TREATMENT PLANT
Consumers asked to voluntarily reduce water use;
some mandatory restrictions may be instituted in San Diego County**

Residents and businesses in San Diego and southwestern Riverside counties are being called upon to voluntarily reduce their water use while a major regional water treatment plant undergoes upgrades during an 11-day shutdown beginning Monday, Nov. 27.

Officials from the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, San Diego County Water Authority, Eastern Municipal Water District and Western Municipal Water District made the precautionary water-saving request as Metropolitan prepares for the planned shutdown of its Robert A. Skinner Water Treatment Plant, located east of Temecula.

“Although some Water Authority member agencies in north San Diego County will institute mandatory restrictions during this shutdown, most of the local agencies in the Skinner plant’s service area will have groundwater and reservoir supplies to call upon to meet retail demands,” said Eddie Rigdon, Metropolitan’s water system operations manager. “As a precaution, however, we’re asking consumers in the region to voluntarily conserve water whenever and wherever possible.”

Residents, businesses and local growers, particularly in north San Diego County, are requested to contact their local water supplier to determine water-use restrictions for their area.

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The Skinner plant shutdown is part of \$400 million in construction under way at the facility to increase the plant's water treatment capacity, improve water quality processes, and modify chemical handling capabilities, Rigdon said.

Work to increase the plant's treatment capacity by 110 million gallons per day is scheduled to be finished by next summer, he added, while water quality improvements would become operational in 2007 and 2009. At the same time the treatment plant is shut down, Metropolitan will inspect and make repairs to major water delivery canals and pipelines that service the area, as well as to valves, meters and other equipment.

"Maintaining and improving our ability to store, process and deliver drinking water throughout our Southern California service area requires periodic curtailments in deliveries while the work is being done," Rigdon said.

In addition, the San Diego County Water Authority also will be conducting pipeline inspections and completing necessary repairs during the shutdown. Metropolitan routinely schedules shutdowns of its facilities in winter months, when temperatures usually are cooler and demands are lower, to complete inspections and perform maintenance and upgrades with the least impact on consumers, Rigdon said.

Metropolitan's Skinner plant is a primary source of supplemental, treated drinking water to communities served by Eastern and Western, which both rely on Metropolitan water for about 80 percent of their water supply needs. The Water Authority calls upon Metropolitan's imported supplies for up to 90 percent of its water needs.

Khos Ghaderi, Eastern's director of water operations, said voluntary water conservation by consumers, combined with activation of system interconnections between water agencies, will offer added safeguards to help ensure that residents and businesses have adequate water during the shutdown. The cooperating agencies, however, stand prepared to intensify the conservation request should locally stored supplies dwindle during the outage.

Residents who want to know more about how the shutdown will affect them should contact their local water provider directly.

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The call for water-use efficiency is consistent with Metropolitan's ongoing region-wide public outreach campaign that encourages reductions in outdoor water use through more efficient irrigation and use of California Friendly® plants in landscapes.

If it hasn't been done, now is the time for residents and businesses to reduce sprinkler times. Water conserved now can be stored for later use. For helpful tips on how to be more water efficient, go to "www.bewaterwise.com."

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