

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SCV Water Committee: Drought Isn't Over

Conservation Critical Despite Last Week's Rain

Suppose your bank account is down to zero. And let's say you have \$10,000 in bills to pay. A stranger walks up and hands you a thousand dollars. You're happy to have the thousand. But you're still \$9,000 short.

That, local water professionals say, is basically what happened with the most recent storms that soaked the Santa Clarita Valley. The SCV Water Committee is asking all residents to remember that, even though the valley is still wringing out from last week's rains, the drought is severe, it's far from over, and it remains as important as ever to conserve water.

The committee, which includes the Castaic Lake Water Agency, the four local water retailers, the City of Santa Clarita and Los Angeles County, reiterated on Tuesday its request that all local water users comply with water use restrictions designed to cut water use by 20 percent.

"We're very happy to see the rain, but that doesn't mean the drought is over," said Mauricio Guardado, retail manager of the Santa Clarita Water Division. "While the recent precipitation is a welcome development that will help mitigate the damage of our ongoing drought, it would be a mistake to assume that any one storm or series of storms means we're out of the woods when it comes to the drought."

To the contrary, even with the recent storms, snowpack in the Sierras -- considered the state's most important water source -- is only at about a quarter of normal.

"We don't want to rain on anyone's parade, so to speak, but it would take a lot more than one rainy week to dig us out of the long-term impacts of this multi-year drought," said Keith Abercrombie, general manager of Valencia Water Company. "We do hope the recent storms are the beginning of a long-term recovery, but that remains to be seen."

In the meantime, residents, businesses and other water users are asked to continue complying with the action plan announced last month by the SCV Water Committee. The measures include actions like adjusting irrigation schedules, running only full loads in washing machines and installing high efficiency appliances and low flow fixtures wherever possible. A full copy of the action plan and other water-saving tips can be found at www.clwa.org or on the individual water retailers' websites.

"With everyone's cooperation, we hope to get through the remainder of this drought without having to impose mandatory restrictions," said Adam Ariki, Assistant Deputy Director of the Los Angeles County Waterworks Districts.

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CLWA General Manager Dan Masnada said it's a good idea to adopt many of these practices as a permanent ethic of water use efficiency, as opposed to just short-term measures during the drought.

"We should always use our resources as efficiently as possible," Masnada said. "And, when this drought ends -- as we believe it will -- the habits we all build now can help us be even better prepared for the next drought, which is just as inevitable as the end of this one is."

About the SCV Water Committee:

The Santa Clarita Valley Water Committee, formerly known as the SCV Drought Committee, was formed in 2008 to bring multiple agencies together to jointly respond to drought conditions in the Santa Clarita Valley. The committee meets regularly to monitor water supply conditions and prepare actions that may need to be taken in the event of drought. Its members include Castaic Lake Water Agency, the City of Santa Clarita, Los Angeles County and the four local water purveyors: Los Angeles County Waterworks District No. 36, Newhall County Water District, Santa Clarita Water Division and Valencia Water Company.

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