

## **DROUGHT UPDATE**

On April 1<sup>st</sup> the Governor issued an Emergency Executive Order related to the ongoing drought. I wish I could report that this is an April Fool's joke but it is not. As you may have seen in the press, the site where the final snow survey was done had zero snow where a few feet should be resting at this time of year. The snow pack in the Sierras was the lowest in the history of measurements. The scope of the drought is truly unprecedented.



The Governor called for a 25% reduction in water consumption along with a number of other measures. Many customers have called to ask what they should do and the simple answer for now is just to try to use less water. The specific impacts of the Governor's declaration are not known at this time as there are details to be worked out. For example, how the requirements apply to agricultural customers is unclear. RMWD will be collecting information from our local and state agencies charged with implementing the order and the Board of Directors will take up the topic at our next few Board meetings.

There are a number of things that we can all expect. First, there will be allocations this year. Whether we see a 25% cutback is uncertain as the projections in Southern California were looking more like a 10-15% cutback until the Governor made his proclamation. It is important to note that Southern California was much better prepared to deal with the drought than Northern California so the impacts are different there than they are here.

We will also see a change in the water rates to deal with the allocation. Over the next few months the Board will consider a variety of options to ensure that we meet our allocation goals. Options include special drought rates that apply to all water use or penalty rates for users that go over their allocations. Over the next several weeks RMWD staff will be presenting information to the Budget and Finance Committee and the full Board for final approval by sometime in June.

For now, the most important thing you can do is to try to cut your water use wherever you can. We realize that many of our customers have already cut back a lot and further cuts may not be possible. If you have done so already you are to be commended and we can't expect a whole lot more from you. If you have not, please take the time to review your irrigation timing and duration, fix leaks, reduce overspray, and evaluate all of your uses of water with an eye toward using the water as efficiently as possible.

There are also regional rebate programs for turf replacement that pay up to \$2/SF for converting turf into low water use landscaping or artificial turf. This can be a great opportunity to change your landscape to be drought tolerant and save some money in the process.

## LAFCO UPDATE

**RAINBOW  
MUNICIPAL  
WATER  
DISTRICT**

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**2015  
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*Juan Atilano*

In the fall of 2013 and early 2014, while the North County JPA board was wrestling with the issue of governance, the RMWD members of the JPA board argued that the at-large election system favored by FPUD would be detrimental to some communities of interest in the RMWD service area, specifically Bonsall and Rainbow. These communities are unique and distinct, and the at-large election system would put them at a disadvantage.

In addition, the RMWD delegates argued that the at-large election system was a probable violation of the California Voting Rights Act (CVRA) which would put RMWD ratepayers at risk of lawsuit. RMWD's delegates to the JPA board argued these facts to no avail, leading to the dissolution of the JPA.

A few weeks ago, the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund (MALDEF), a Latino advocacy group, sent FPUD a demand letter which describes FPUD's at-large election system as one that disenfranchises voters in the district, and requests FPUD "change its at-large system to a district-based system." MALDEF has apparently concluded that FPUD's at-large system is a violation of the CVRA and went on to state that should FPUD force its election system onto RMWD the combined agency would also be in violation of the CVRA. Where RMWD's objection focused on our communities of interest based on geography, MALDEF is concerned about communities of interest based on ethnicity. At-large systems disenfranchise voters in either case just the same.

There have been erroneous statements by FPUD officials alleging that RMWD was somehow involved in the production of this letter. This is 100% incorrect. RMWD had nothing to do with the letter and had no communication with MALDEF prior to the issuance of their letter to FPUD.

Since the days of the JPA, RMWD has consistently stated in public that the at-large election system will disenfranchise you as a voter, and put RMWD at risk for litigation such as what appears to be occurring at FPUD now.

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**COMMITTEE VACANCIES**

RMWD is currently seeking new ideas from community volunteers that would like to serve on one or more of its three committees (Communications, Budget and Finance, Engineering).

Committee meetings are open to the public, and interested individuals may comment on items prior to consideration by the Committee. Once an item is voted on, the Committee forwards their recommendation on to the full Board of Directors for consideration.

The Budget and Finance Committee is responsible for the review of District finances and financial recordkeeping. They help prepare the annual operating budget, review water and sewer rates and fees, and scrutinize the District's annual audit.

The Communications Committee assists the Board and General Manager with internal and external public relations campaigns, preparation of the newsletters, community outreach and other public relations programs.

The Engineering Committee works with the District Engineer to review project need, feasibility and design, reviews construction plans and specification and prioritize the District's Capital Improvement Program.

If you are interested in volunteering to serve on one or more of RMWD committee, please contact Dawn Washburn at (760) 728-1178 Ext. 129.