



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Conservation Urged

PCWA Declares Water Emergency

Water Users: Reduce Usage by 25 Percent or More

AUBURN -- Directors of the Placer County Water Agency on Tuesday (May 10) declared a water shortage emergency and asked that all water users reduce their water use by 25 percent or more until the emergency ends.

It is expected to be in mid-June (or later) until normal flows of water return to PCWA for its customers. Both irrigation canal customers and treated water customers are asked immediately to significantly reduce their water use. "With community support of a 25-percent or more reduction in water use, I think we'll be able to get through this," said PCWA General Manager David Breninger.

The Board's action followed a public hearing that attracted about 170 people to Placer Hall at the Gold Country Fairgrounds. PCWA had moved the meeting to the fairgrounds to accommodate a large crowd.

The agency's response and public concern are a result of the April 19th failure of the Pacific Gas and Electric Company's Bear River Canal. A section of the canal slid down a steep canyon wall above the Bear River when the earth beneath the canal gave way.

The incident cut off the main source of water to 150,000 water users of PCWA in areas from Auburn to Loomis, Rocklin and Lincoln.

PG&E, which has mounted a massive restoration effort at the site, is now estimating

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that full water delivery may be available by mid-June. Until Tuesday, the company had been estimating a late June completion.

Mike Jones, PG&E's acting vice president for power generation, said the schedule has been moved up because of the good progress made on the repairs. Crews have been working around the clock. He offered special thanks to nearby property owners and the City of Colfax for putting up with the "24/7 construction schedule."

Jones also announced that PG&E had offered up to \$1.8 million to PCWA and the Nevada Irrigation District to help compensate for the electrical energy they have consumed in pumping alternate water supplies to customers.

Fourteen members of the public, mostly agricultural water users, addressed the Board during the public hearing portion of the meeting. Concerns included potential losses of income, crops and pasture. Several speakers said they could endure rotating outages, but low levels in some canals, especially near the ends of canals, have not delivered enough water.

Board Chairman Lowell Jarvis encouraged everyone in the audience to do his or her part. "We can conserve, and we'll get through this together," he said.

PCWA directors will review the emergency situation at each of their meetings until the water shortage is over and the water shortage emergency declaration can be rescinded.

Conservation Measures to Follow
How You Can Help Save Water

PCWA is conducting a wide public outreach effort that includes letters this week to its 37,000 customer accounts.

All customers using piped and treated drinking water and those using irrigation water from the canal system are urged to conserve water by 25 percent or more.

These are some of the primary conservation measures called for in the PCWA water shortage declaration:

Treated Water

- Customers are requested to reduce use by 25 percent
- Outdoor irrigation only on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays for those with even-numbered (last digit) street addresses
- Outdoor irrigation only on Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays for those with odd-numbered addresses
- No outdoor irrigation on Mondays
- Numerous other conservation methods (see www.pcwa.net)

Canal Water

- PCWA will reduce the size of orifices in canal water boxes in Zones 1 and 3, placing priority for public health and safety reasons on preserving adequate flows in canals that supply water treatment plants. Reductions will allow 50-75 percent of normal summer deliveries or 1/2 miners' inch, whichever is larger.
- Rotating outages on canals will continue as needed
- PCWA canal operators will closely monitor canal flows and maintain communication with Customer Services personnel responsible for providing canal flow information to customers.
- Canal water customers who inform the agency they wish to forego this year's water purchase for the duration of the water shortage emergency will not lose entitlements or face charges for turning service off and on.

The PCWA website is being updated daily with outage information, maps of affected areas and helpful hints for saving water. Customers are encouraged to stay up to date at www.pcwa.net. The PCWA Customer Services Center may be reached at (530) 823-4850 or toll-free (800) 464-0030.