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NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

AUBURN - The current rainfall season is on pace to be as dry as the drought year of 1976-77, it was reported at Thursday's (Feb. 16) meeting of the Placer County Water Agency Board of Directors.

The water supply briefing was offered by Pacific Gas and Electric Company partnership coordinator Dave Ward, who provided statistics and projections on local and statewide water supply conditions.

Ward said that as of Feb. 16 seasonal precipitation across the Sierra was 42.6 percent of average. Seasonal precipitation is measured each year from July 1 through June 30.

"This year is barely above 1976-77," he said. "If the current pattern continues, it could be the sixth or seventh driest year in 117 years of record-keeping."

PG&E is currently projecting that less than half of normal runoff will occur on the Yuba River watershed (44 percent) and American River watershed (45 percent).

Conditions could change, with March and April often bringing wet conditions, but the short-term outlook is for dry weather to continue through February, said Ward.

On a positive note, PG&E is storing above average levels of water in the mountain reservoirs that supply the PCWA water system, however reduced flows through the Bear River Canal to PCWA are likely this year if dry conditions persist, he noted.

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PCWA Director of Field Services Mike Nichol and Senior Engineer Tony Firenzi said the water agency is making contingency plans for dry year water deliveries. "March and April will be the decisive months," said Firenzi.

Director of Customer Services Matt Young has been making preparations to provide customers with ongoing information via www.pcwa.net and public outreach meetings, as well as through coordination with other local agencies and the agricultural community in the event that dry conditions worsen in 2012.

Board members applauded staff for their proactive approach and expressed hope that more normal precipitation patterns will return over the next few months.

In other business, directors:

- learned that the agency has won three awards from the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE), Sacramento Section, for its work in 2011. Director of Technical Services Brian Martin said the agency won the Outstanding Engineering Project Award for the spillway enlargement at French Meadows Reservoir and the Utility Project of the Year Award for its Gold Run Pipeline replacement project. PCWA also won the ASCE 2011 Emergency Response Award for its water supply actions following last April's failure of the PG&E Bear River Canal. Award presentations are scheduled Feb. 22 in Sacramento.

- heard a presentation from Director of Administrative Services Michael Willihnganz on his department's 2011 accomplishments and 2012 goals.

The next regular meeting of the PCWA Board of Directors will be held at 2 p.m. on Thursday, Mar. 1, at the PCWA Business Center, 144 Ferguson Road, in Auburn.

Information on PCWA board meetings may be obtained through the Clerk to the Board at (530) 823-4850 or (800) 464-0030. PCWA information is also posted at www.pcwa.net.