



## NEWS RELEASE

CITY OF SANTA BARBARA  
Public Works Department  
Water Resources Division

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
July 20, 2007

### **It's Official: The Driest Year in Over a Century** ***As Always, Conservation Pays***

**SANTA BARBARA, CA – July 20, 2007**

Official City rainfall records show that the year ending June 30<sup>th</sup> was Santa Barbara's driest in over 100 years. Total rainfall of 5.97 inches measured at El Estero Wastewater Treatment Plant was the lowest amount since the 4.57 inches recorded in 1898. City officials are emphasizing two points. First, our water supply is planned to withstand several years of below average rainfall and water supplies remain adequate for all reasonable and efficient uses of water. Second, as always, water conservation is an important part of stretching our supplies in case the recent dry weather continues.

The City has a diverse water supply, including two surface water reservoirs, a number of groundwater wells, State Water, and recycled water. The desalination facility remains a part of the water supply as well, and could be reactivated in the event of prolonged drought or other major supply interruption. Lake Cachuma, the primary water supply for the City and other South Coast water purveyors, provides 5 or more years of storage and is still about 80% full due to above average rainfall in two prior years. "Lake Cachuma is such an important water supply asset. It minimizes the impact of a single dry year like the one that just ended," said Public Works Director Tony Nisich.

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But an adequate water supply does not mean we can forget about conservation. The City's water supply is secure in part because of the ongoing efforts of our customers to be efficient in their water use. Thanks to water conservation and use of recycled water, potable water usage is down 15% compared to the 1980's, even with a larger population and increased irrigation requirements resulting from the record dry year. Citizens are urged to continue to take advantage of the many conservation services offered by the City's Water Conservation Program. Water checkups are free for all City water customers. Call the Water Hotline at 564-5460 to schedule a check-up, or for any questions about water conservation. Rebates for water efficient plumbing fixtures are available for homes and businesses. Information on efficient irrigation, water wise plants, water efficiency in your home or business, graywater, and much more is available at [www.SantaBarbaraCA.gov/water](http://www.SantaBarbaraCA.gov/water).

Water officials continue to monitor the water supply situation and will present a water supply update to the City's Water Commission in early August. The report will project availability of water supplies and any potential shortages, assuming continuing dry weather. The public is encouraged to attend and can call the Water Hotline to find out the time and place of the meeting.

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