

# ***Frequently Asked Questions***

## **Interim Agricultural Water Program (IAWP)**

### **Supply Reduction for Olivenhain**

#### **Municipal Water District (OMWD) Customers**

Since information started surfacing about the possibility of an IAWP Supply Reduction, our staff has fielded literally hundreds of phone calls and questions about why this is happening and how the supply reduction will be implemented. We have attempted to pose and then answer the most frequently asked of those questions below.

#### **Q. What is the problem with our water supply?**

**A.** The answer to this question is very complicated from an historical and political perspective and could literally fill volumes. We will attempt to provide an abridged answer, as follows:

Our State Water Project (“SWP”) supply, which meets about 40% of the San Diego region’s water needs, passes through the Sacramento – San Joaquin Delta (“Delta”) on its way to the system’s export pumps on the south end of the Delta. The Delta is also home to several endangered fish, including the Delta Smelt. In decline for many reasons, one of the factors is that the fish are drawn through the export pumps, impacting their population. Various environmental groups, including the National Resource Defense Council (NRDC), brought suit several years ago under the Federal Endangered Species Act to stop the pumping to protect the fish and force the state to apply for a new operating permit which would protect the Smelt. In August 2007, a federal judge ruled in favor of the NRDC, and ordered that the state seek a new permit. In the meantime, the Delta export pumping has been restricted between December of 2007 and June of 2008. This order reduced SWP exports by up to 30%, resulting in a shortage to Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD) and the San Diego County Water Authority (SDCWA). As a result, MWD has called for an IAWP reduction of 30% to help offset the impact of the reduced SWP supply.

#### **Q. Will a wet winter resolve the water supply problem?**

**A.** No, unfortunately not. Irrespective of how wet the coming winter may be, the court-imposed pumping restrictions will still be in place, as well as the need to reduce deliveries to IAWP.

#### **Q. How long will this situation last?**

**A.** The current pumping restrictions will last until the new operating permit is issued in late 2008. However, it is anticipated that the same or a similar level of pumping restriction will be included in the new operating permit. As long as there is a conflict between exporting water and the survival of the endangered species in the Delta, there will be pumping and water supply restrictions. The long-term solution is a facility to bring water from north of the Delta around the Delta directly to the export pumps, thus isolating the fish from the pumps. This, however, has not been approved, and if and when it is approved, it could take 10 to 12 years to implement. However, there are some interim solutions to improve the water export conditions that could be implemented in

three to five years. ***Consequently, IAWP customers as well as Municipal & Industrial (M&I) customers could be facing water supply restrictions of some level for at least three to five years.***

**Q. Why are only IAWP customers being required to have a reduced supply when others are only asked to do voluntary conservation?**

**A.** Under its enabling act, MWD can only sell discounted water to agriculture certified customers which is surplus to Municipal and Industrial (M&I) needs. As such, by definition, agricultural water is considered surplus and subject to reduction or full interruption when MWD declares that the amount of surplus water available is reduced or eliminated entirely.

In recognition of this “interruptible status” MWD has historically established lower rates for agricultural customers with the IAWP, started in mid-1994, as the most recent iteration of the agricultural discount rate. As such, IAWP participants pay a lower rate for their water supply in recognition of the fact that they are an interruptible class of customers.

When MWD determines that they may not have enough water to meet all M&I needs, as occurred in 1991-92, IAWP customers are called upon to reduce first and then deeper than their M&I counter-parts.

**Q. How much are IAWP customers required to reduce usage?**

**A.** At this time IAWP customers are being required to reduce their monthly usage by up to 30% compared to usage levels during July 2006 through June 2007, which was determined to be the base period.

**Q. Could this supply reduction level increase?**

**A.** Yes. If M&I customers are required to go to mandatory usage reduction, then IAWP customers could be required to increase the amount of reduction to 40% and possibly beyond.

**Q. How will IAWP customers know how much water to use in a given month?**

**A.** If requested, each customer has been provided monthly usage allocations covering usage from January through December 2008.

**Q. Can the allocations be combined for multiple meters serving one property or multiple meters serving multiple properties in the District into one allocation account?**

**A.** Yes, if the multiple meters are serving properties under the same ownership. However, allocations for meters serving different ownerships, but under a common lease or management contract, cannot be combined into one allocation account. All group bills will be mailed at the end of each month.

**Q. How can IAWP customers track their usage through each month?**

**A.** Each customer will be advised of the read date for their meter and they can read their meter on the same date. They can then track their own usage through the month to

determine where their usage is in relation to their respective allocation. Meter reading dates and instructions on how to read the meter will be provided and assistance in the field will also be available.

**Q. What happens if an IAWP customer's use is over the allocation for the month?**

**A.** Usage over the monthly allocation and any earned conservation credits carried forward from prior months will be subject to a penalty rate. Please refer to the OMWD IAWP Guidelines for more information on penalties.

**Q. What happens when an IAWP customer's use is under the monthly allotment?**

**A.** When an IAWP customer's use is under the monthly allotment, the under usage is recorded as a "conservation credit" which can be rolled forward to the next month or months to offset possible over-usage in a future month in the same calendar year.

**Q. Can conservation credits be carried forward out of the 2008 supply reduction period into 2009 or beyond, assuming the need to reduce water demand continues?**

**A.** No. According to MWD's guidelines, all credits or penalties will be final at the end of the calendar 2008 period, and, if there is a reduction in 2009, then a new accounting of conservation credits and penalties will begin.

**Q. What happens if an IAWP customer has exceeded the total allocation for a specific meter or group of meters at the end of the calendar 2008 period?**

**A.** If at the end of the calendar 2008 period, the customer has exceeded the total allocation, then that customer's allocation in a 2009 supply reduction program will be reduced by that same amount. When the supply reduction requirements are lifted, then the customer's access to the IAWP discount will be permanently reduced by the amount the customer went over during the supply reduction periods. The same principal will apply to the entire Olivenhain Municipal Water District if, as an agency, it fails to meet the reduction requirement.

**Q. If because of loss of a well, new growth, new plantings or other valid circumstances occurring during or after the base period, can an IAWP customer make a valid request or appeal for an additional water allocation?**

**A.** No, unfortunately not. Through the San Diego County Water Authority, MWD has allocated OMWD a fixed amount of water for 2008. Further, MWD is not allowing any adjustments to that amount for loss of local supply, new plantings, growth, etc. As such, the only way a customer(s) can receive additional water is by reducing the allocation to all customers to create a pool for reallocation to other growers.

**Q. What can be done to reduce water demand to meet the 30% reduction?**

**A.** Ultimately, compliance strategies are up to the individual growers. In the 1991-92 drought reduction, customers took a number of different approaches including select tree removal, stumping, stumping and re-grafting, nursery stock reduction and abandonment of portions of groves or orchards. Efforts were also made to improve water use efficiency

where possible. While OMWD does not and will not make any recommendations, we will direct you to several sources, including the:

**UC Farm Extension (858) 694-2856**

**San Diego County Farm Bureau (760) 745-3023**

**California Avocado Commission (800) 344-4333**

**Mission Resource Conservation District (760) 728-1332**

**Q. If I have a question, is there anyone I can contact?**

For specific information about your account, allocation or appeals and for general information about the IAWP Supply Reduction:

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