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RWA Approves Ambitious Water Efficiency Program *Regional Effort Will Save Water, Help Protect Lower American River*

SACRAMENTO, Calif. – The Regional Water Authority (RWA) has approved a large-scale water efficiency program for the next year that will bolster water use efficiency in the Sacramento region and help local water suppliers meet commitments to protect the lower American River.

The program, approved this week by RWA’s Executive Committee, is launching into its fourth year with a campaign in May reminding consumers to use water efficiently as the outdoor watering season begins. The campaign, which will bring water use efficiency messages to over 20 local area billboards and promote a new hotline for water efficiency tips, coincides with Water Awareness Month in California.

“Water is our most valued resource. Using it wisely stretches our limited supplies, saves ratepayers money and benefits our environment,” RWA Chair Pauline Rocucci said. “Implementing water-saving programs on a regional scale makes sense from a water management standpoint as well as a business standpoint.”

RWA’s program builds on three years of successful efforts to help participating agencies fulfill commitments to implement water use best management practices (BMPs) as part of the Sacramento Water Forum Agreement. Signed in 2000 by local water purveyors, business leaders, environmental groups and others, the agreement is aimed at providing a reliable water supply for the region’s future while preserving the environmental, recreational and aesthetic values of the lower American River.

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Roccucci, who also serves as chair of Placer County Water Agency (PCWA), noted that local water agencies such as PCWA are investing in proactive water efficiency programs that make the most of surface and groundwater supplies as communities grow. Participating in regional efforts as well allows local agencies to leverage their investments and positions the region to take advantage of grant funding opportunities.

“We are already seeing the benefits of regional partnerships,” Roccucci said. “RWA is making tremendous progress in addressing our region’s water supply future. I’m proud to be part of a region that is on the leading edge of regional water planning and management.”

RWA has achieved several successes in the grant arena. To date, RWA has received three water efficiency grants funded by Proposition 13, a statewide bond approved by California voters in 2000. The grants, totaling more than \$1.2 million, provided funding for programs for large landscape irrigation efficiency as well as leak detection and repair.

In addition to the billboard campaign and water conservation hotline, RWA’s 2005 Regional Water Efficiency Program will feature sign-ups for free irrigation checkups for homes and businesses, toilet replacement rebates, public outreach activities and school education throughout the region. RWA also will continue the popular Rinse & Save program, which has distributed hundreds of water efficient pre-rinse spray nozzles to local restaurants through a partnership between RWA and the California Urban Water Conservation Council.

Leo Winternitz, executive director of the Water Forum, said RWA’s program is getting “on-the-ground results” for local water purveyors working to meet their Water Forum commitments. “That translates into long-term benefits for the American River,” he said.

More on RWA’s program is available at www.rwah2o.org.

RWA is a joint powers authority representing 22 water providers in the greater Sacramento area. Its primary mission is to help its members protect and enhance the reliability, availability, affordability and quality of water resources. For more information, see www.rwah2o.org.

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