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Impending Drought Prompts State Engineer to Encourage New Mexicans to Actively Conserve Water

(SANTA FE, New Mexico) – Forecasts that predict New Mexico may experience an extreme drought this year has State Engineer John D'Antonio urging New Mexicans to actively conserve water and reduce their use.

"New Mexico has received minimal precipitation this winter, and forecasts indicate that severe drought conditions appear likely this spring," said State Engineer John D'Antonio. "The Office of the State Engineer is taking a proactive approach towards managing the state's limited water resources during drought cycles by implementing the Active Water Resource Management initiative, but we need the public to be part of the solution as well."

To help New Mexicans begin their conservation efforts, the Office of the State Engineer's Water Use and Conservation Bureau compiled a list of low-to-no-cost suggestions for reducing indoor and outdoor water use.

Outdoor Water Use

- § Check to see if there are any local watering restrictions and remember to adjust your irrigation timers. This not only reduces water use, but may also prevent a potential fine.
- § When faced with water restrictions, concentrate on watering trees, then shrubs and perennials.
- § Water your lawn and plants with a hose or a watering can when possible. This reduces water use by 1/3 of automatic sprinklers. Be sure all hoses have automatic shutoff nozzles.

(MORE)

- § Maintain your outdoor irrigation system. Fix any leaks and connections in hoses, drip lines, emitters and sprinkler heads.
- § If there are any local restrictions on car washing, use commercial car washes that recycle their water.
- § When washing your car at home, be sure to always use a bucket and a hose with an automatic shutoff nozzle to minimize the water used.

Indoor Water Use

- § Run your dishwasher and washing machine only when full.
- § Don't pre-rinse your dishes – Consumer Reports testing found pre-rinsing does not improve cleaning.
- § Keep showers short. If your fixture is old (pre-1994), consider installing a low-flow showerhead.
- § Check toilets for silent leaks. This is easily done by doing the following:
 - 1) Add six drops of food coloring to the tank
 - 2) Do not flush
 - 3) Wait 15 minutes
 - 4) Check to see if the food color has leaked from the tank into the bowl.

If the food coloring leaks into the bowl, check to see if there is debris in the flapper mechanism or if the mechanism is worn out. If the mechanism is worn out it needs to be replaced. Be sure the replacement is a low-flow mechanism, as some flappers increase the gallons per flush.

"Hot, dry and windy weather, much like we have recently experienced, can increase outdoor residential water use significantly," said Water Use and Conservation Bureau Chief John Longworth. "By using common sense and following through with these simple water conservation tips, this increased water use can be greatly reduced."

For more information or to order conservation brochures, please contact the Office of the State Engineer's Water Use and Conservation Bureau at 1-800-WATERNM or waternm@state.nm.us. For a complete listing of brochures visit the agency's website at, www.ose.state.nm.us/water-info/conservation.

The Office of the State Engineer is charged with administering the state's water resources. The State Engineer has power over the supervision, measurement, appropriation, and distribution of all surface and groundwater in New Mexico, including streams and rivers that cross state boundaries. The State Engineer is also Secretary of the Interstate Stream Commission and oversees its staff.

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