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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Marin Water takes proactive steps to address drought**

With reservoirs at historic lows and drought worsening, Marin Water's Board of Directors unanimously adopted mandatory restrictions Tuesday that prohibit washing vehicles at home, powerwashing homes and businesses, and flooding gutters. Watering grass on public medians and using potable water for dust control, sewer flushing and street cleaning are also prohibited. The ordinance also restricts golf courses to watering tees and greens, but those provisions would not take effect until May 20. The board will revisit further irrigation restrictions in two weeks. Mandatory restrictions are triggered when reservoir levels drop to 40,000 acre-feet by April 1. Current storage levels are at just over 41,000 acre-feet, as we move into the warmer summer months.

The restrictions come after consecutive dry years. With only 20 inches of rainfall last year, 2020 marked the second-driest year in 90 years. Following another dry winter, the district declared a drought in mid-February and launched a public awareness campaign asking customers to conserve water by voluntarily cutting back on irrigation, not washing vehicles, and conserving water indoors. Persistent warm, dry weather lowered Marin Water's reservoir storage capacity to 52 percent—the lowest level in nearly 40 years. Storage levels for this time of year are typically more than 90 percent.

"Our goal is to reduce our overall districtwide water use by 40 percent," said Cynthia Koehler, president of Marin Water's board of directors. "Our community has been through droughts before, and they have always risen to the challenge. Our most affordable reservoir of opportunity to address drought and grow our climate resilience is outdoor water use, which doubles during the summer months. Marin is a community that pulls together and knows how to conserve, and I have confidence that we will reach our water use reduction goal."

While the bulk of the new water restrictions take effect immediately, the district plans to delay enforcement until May 1 to give customers time to prepare. District officials said their approach will focus primarily on education, and they will rely on the community to follow the rules.



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“Our priority is to partner with the community around building greater water use efficiency now and in the future,” Koehler said. “Water is a limited resource and Marin Water will be providing a range of programs and incentives to support our residential, business and institutional customers with opportunities to conserve.”

Violations would first result in a written warning. Second violations would result in another warning and a \$25 fine. Subsequent violations would result in a \$250 fine. The ordinance also includes a process for variances that allows customers to seek an exemption for hardship or for health and safety reasons. For questions about variances, customers can email the district at [Variance@MarinWater.org](mailto:Variance@MarinWater.org).

To help customers conserve water, the district offers programs and incentives for water conservation, including rebates for replacing lawns with drought-resistant landscaping, discounts on graywater kits that reuse water for irrigation, and free water-efficient nozzles, showerheads, and faucet aerators.

For more information about the new restrictions and water conservation, visit [MarinWater.org/Conserve](http://MarinWater.org/Conserve) or email the district at [Conservation@MarinWater.org](mailto:Conservation@MarinWater.org).

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