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New Zone 7 Plant Reduces Groundwater “Hardness”
Demineralization Plant Also Enhances Water-Supply Reliability

Zone 7 Water Agency has begun operating a plant that will be a tool for managing salts and minerals in the Livermore-Amador Valley’s groundwater basin, improve overall water-supply reliability and help to soften some of the water delivered primarily to the western side of its service area.

Using a process called reverse osmosis, Zone 7’s Mocho Groundwater Demineralization Plant reduces the hardness of groundwater pumped from the Agency’s existing wells in northern Pleasanton. Initial performance testing is complete, although additional adjustments over the next several months are anticipated.

The facility can remove minerals from up to 7.7 million gallons per day (mgd) of groundwater. After mineral concentrate is removed, up to 6.1 mgd of demineralized water can be blended with other groundwater and surface-water supplies prior to delivery to retailers -- primarily to the City of Pleasanton and the Dublin San Ramon Services District, since the water that Zone 7 delivers to the City of Livermore and the California Water Service Company in Livermore is typically comprised of State Water Project surface water imported via the Delta. The remaining 1.6 mgd of mineral concentrate is exported out of the Valley to San Francisco Bay.

In the long term, all Valley residents will benefit from the plant’s operation because salt removal from the groundwater basin will facilitate regional recycled water projects for irrigation use, thereby enhancing the Valley’s overall water-supply reliability. This is especially important in

light of continuing concerns about the long-term reliability of supplies conveyed through the ecologically fragile Delta. In addition, while Zone 7 delivers groundwater primarily to Pleasanton and to DSRSD, the plant could also reduce potential Livermore water hardness if groundwater is being delivered to the east end of the system.

Hard water is safe for drinking, cooking and other household uses. However, a high content of calcium, magnesium and other minerals in groundwater over an extended period of time can shorten the life of plumbing fixtures and appliances (i.e., hot-water heaters and dishwashers), leave white spots on cars and dishes after washing and require more soap and detergent for laundry and other cleaning.

The actual mix of groundwater and surface water that reaches a particular customer's tap varies for a number of reasons. Under normal conditions, Zone 7 delivers surface water to Livermore and to southeast Pleasanton. But depending on the time of year, it provides both surface water and groundwater to much of Pleasanton and to DSRSD. More groundwater is pumped during dry or drought periods, summer peak demand or when water-treatment facilities are closed for maintenance. In addition, both the City of Pleasanton and the California Water Service Company, which serves part of Livermore, operate their own groundwater wells to add to their Zone 7 water supplies. These non-Zone 7 groundwater sources are not treated by Zone 7's demineralization plant.

During periods when the demineralization project is operating, many people in Pleasanton and in DSRSD's service area will see some reduction in water hardness. The degree depends on several factors, such as where they live in relation to the demineralization plant, water demands in each retailer's service area, seasonal water-supply variations that determine how many other wells are operating at a given time, and water-system operational decisions -- some made by Zone 7 and some by individual retailers. Some people will see less change, either because they don't get groundwater or because they receive groundwater from Zone 7 and/or other wells not directly connected to the plant. In general, softened water will be served to about 20,000 homes for approximately nine months per year as a result of this project.

The Mocho plant cost \$35.6 million to plan, design and construct and is funded by water rates, connection fees on new development and a \$740,000 Proposition 50 state grant. It will cost an estimated \$1.5 million to operate it for the nine months planned each year.

For general questions about the Mocho Groundwater Demineralization Plant, contact Zone 7. Customers wanting to know if their particular home or business might benefit directly from the plant should contact their individual water retailer.

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Zone 7 Water Agency is one of the 10 active zones of the Alameda County Flood Control and Water Conservation District. The District was established by the State Legislature in October 1949 to solve problems of flooding, drainage, channel erosion and water supply and conservation in Alameda County. In 1957, by popular vote, Zone 7 became a special district governed by a seven-member board of directors. In addition to providing flood protection to all of eastern Alameda County, Zone 7 supplies treated drinking water for nearly 200,000 people served by local retailers, including the cities of Livermore and Pleasanton, the Dublin San Ramon Services District, and the California Water Service Company. Zone 7 also distributes untreated water to local agriculture operations and golf courses.