



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**Zone 7's New High-Efficiency Toilet Rebates
Help Residents Save More Money, More Water**
Drought Underscores Need to Conserve

At a time of drought and a slumping economy, residents of Livermore, Pleasanton, Dublin and Dougherty Valley can save both water and money under Zone 7 Water Agency's new rebate program for high-efficiency toilets (HETs).

Starting on July 1, Zone 7's Toilet Rebate Program will be updated to rebate high-efficiency toilets, including dual-flush toilets, that use 1.28 gallons of water or less per flush. That's at least 20 percent less water than Ultra Low-Flush Toilets (ULFTs), for which rebates have been offered in the past. And the new rebates are for more money.

Rebates of up to \$150 per HET are being offered by Zone 7 in cooperation with the Livermore-Amador Valley's water retailers – the City of Livermore, California Water Service Company, the City of Pleasanton and Dublin San Ramon Services District.

Ultra-Low Flush Toilets purchased after July 1 will no longer qualify for rebates (up to \$75 each). People who buy ULFTs prior to July 1 and want a rebate must apply by Sept. 30, 2008.

In 1994, Zone 7 and local water retailers implemented the Ultra-Low-Flush Toilet Rebate Program to encourage households to retrofit their homes with water-conserving ULFTs. Nearly 12,850 ULFTs have been installed in Zone 7's service area, resulting in an annual

water savings of approximately 580 acre-feet of water – enough to serve nearly 1,200 households each year.

The new HETs can save even more water at a time when water conservation is especially critical in light of Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger's declaration that California is officially in a drought. In addition, there has been reduced State Water Project pumping from the ecologically fragile San Joaquin Delta.

Zone 7 has been urging customers to cut usage by at least 10 percent for the second summer in a row. Through wise water management, the agency has enough stored groundwater and other reserve supplies to meet projected demands during 2008. Nevertheless, it has been urging conservation because drought conditions may persist and because court-ordered water-supply reductions relating to pumping from the Delta are likely to carry forward into future years.

High-efficiency toilets aren't the only water-saving appliance for which residents can get rebates. Zone 7 and Pacific Gas & Electric Co. are together offering a streamlined rebate process to customers who buy qualified water- and energy-efficient clothes washers. A single machine can save 5,100 gallons of water a year, or about 3 percent of a home's average water use. Rebates of up to \$200 are available (the water portion of the rebate is up to \$125, a portion of which is being covered by a grant from the state Department of Water Resources).

There are even more ways to conserve water -- especially during summer when it comes to outdoor water use and when substantial amounts of water can be wasted.

“One of the biggest ways people can save water is in their landscaping,” said Zone 7 General Manager Jill Duerig. “Many people have landscaping, such as grass, that requires a lot of water. By changing plant types, watering less frequently, or watering for shorter periods of time, a lot of savings can be realized.”

Converting to drought-tolerant trees and plants, which require less water once established, is an important way to conserve. Here are some other ways that people can save water outdoors, many of which require only a change of behavior:

- Water the lawn before 7 a.m. when there is less evaporation.
- Add a layer of mulch around landscaping to better retain moisture.
- Use a broom instead of a hose to clean the sidewalk or driveway.
- When washing the car, use a shut-off nozzle or, better yet, go to one of several full-service or drive-through car washes in the Valley that recycle their water.
- Cover a swimming pool when it's not in use to reduce evaporation.

For other water-saving tips, go to the conservation page of Zone 7's web site, www.zone7water.com; or check with your local water retailer.

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The 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. Along with flood protection, Zone 7 supplies water to all of eastern Alameda County and a population of more than 190,000. Treated water is sold wholesale to 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.