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NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONSERVATION AHEAD FOR PCWA CUSTOMERS DUE TO PG&E DELIVERY ISSUE

AUBURN, Calif. (June 24, 2024) — Customers served by Placer County Water Agency (PCWA) are urged to reduce their water use to help manage an ongoing water delivery problem caused by damaged Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) facilities.

PG&E has run into several unanticipated schedule delays that have pushed their return of service date from June to July 30th, more than 50 days beyond the original estimate.

The PCWA Board of Directors received an update from PG&E on the status of the repairs to their facilities last Thursday. PCWA staff then provided a report to the Board on what that means for its customers as a result; the further delay in repairs is significant enough to trigger immediate conservation measures until PG&E can complete the repair.

Customers who receive 1 miner's inch or more of untreated (canal) water will have their water delivery orifice reduced by approximately 20 percent. The commodity portion of their water bills will be adjusted accordingly. Customers with an untreated water service smaller than this will not have their delivery orifice reduced but are being asked to reduce water use by the same amount, 20 percent.

In addition, all other PCWA customers, including retail customers who receive treated water, are being asked to conserve. This includes reducing landscape watering (while prioritizing water for trees), avoiding sprinkler runoff, watering only early in the day, and fixing leaks. PCWA will be communicating with customers about the ways they can help achieve these goals, as well as PCWA rebate programs that can help offset costs for making water-efficiency upgrades.

PCWA Board Chairman Robert Dugan said this collective effort is necessary to help the region

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cope with an unexpected shortage caused by PG&E infrastructure problems. He emphasized it would be temporary.

“It is disappointing that PCWA must impose water conservation actions in a good water year,” Dugan said. “The cause is directly related to a failure of a critical PG&E facility. Because PG&E’s repairs have been repeatedly delayed, we are now forced to ask our customers to conserve, so we have enough water to last through summer.”

"This is not a water supply or a drought issue; it's an infrastructure issue at one of PG&E's facilities. In times like these, it's important that we all pitch in to help each other out until this issue is resolved."

PCWA delivers untreated water from Sierra Nevada streams via open canals originally constructed during the Gold Rush. This water also makes up a substantial share of the water PCWA treats and delivers to homes and businesses. The agency buys this water from PG&E, which operates Lake Spaulding and related hydroelectric facilities. One of those facilities, known as Spaulding Powerhouse #1, was taken out of service by PG&E in March due to a major leak that caused damage to the concrete backfill of a discharge piping and the foundation and structural columns of the powerhouse building. PG&E originally estimated its facilities would be repaired by early June, but recently reported that repairs won't be complete until July 30, even with welders and technicians working around the clock.

PCWA's neighboring water agency, Nevada Irrigation District (NID), has been similarly affected by the PG&E outage. Both PCWA and NID have been relying on water stored downstream in Rollins Reservoir to meet their customer needs in Placer County. NID owns and operates Rollins Reservoir, but PG&E stores and manages a portion of their own water supply in that reservoir. That PG&E supply available for delivery to PCWA could be depleted by mid-July without urgent conservation measures.

PCWA is committed to ensuring the reliable delivery of water to its customers and is taking all necessary actions to mitigate the impact of repair delays. This includes increased pumping from the American River and groundwater wells and purchasing water from neighboring water agencies. If conservation measures are not successful, or if completion of the repair work is further delayed, additional mandatory cutbacks may be required.

The next regular meeting of the PCWA Board of Directors will be Monday, July 8, 2:00 PM, at the PCWA Business Center, 144 Ferguson Road, in Auburn. PCWA board meetings are open to the public.

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About PCWA

Placer County Water Agency (PCWA) is the primary water resource agency for Placer County, California, with a broad range of responsibilities including water resource planning and management, retail and wholesale supply of drinking water and irrigation water, and production of hydroelectric energy.