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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DROUGHT SQUEEZES WATER REPLENISHMENT SUPPLY
Future planning calls for “Water Independence”

Lakewood, CA, June 30, 2008: The Water Replenishment District (WRD) announced today that for the first time in its 48-year history, imported water for spreading to replenish the underground aquifers in southeast Los Angeles County has been unavailable for an entire year. The causes include local drought and the absence of replenishment water from problem-plagued Northern California and the drought-stricken Colorado River.

“In an average year WRD typically purchases 22,000 acre-feet of imported water from Northern California and the Colorado River for storage underground, the equivalent of 2/3 the annual water use for the City of Long Beach,” said WRD President Rob Katherman. “There has been no replenishment water available for purchase from the Metropolitan Water District (MWD) since May 1, 2007, and delivery is not expected to resume until at least 2010. Even in prior drought years, imported water for groundwater replenishment has been available to purchase, at least on a limited basis.”

Forty percent of the water demands of 43 Los Angeles County cities from Manhattan Beach to Whittier and Los Angeles to Long Beach are met through water stored during “wet years.”

“Our groundwater supplies are in relatively good shape. Over the years, we have increased our ability to capture additional storm water and have greatly increased our use of recycled water to meet replenishment needs. But, with dry conditions in many parts of the Southwest, two of the three main sources of storage supplies, rain and imported water, are non-existent for storage to buffer future droughts,” Katherman said.

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“In addition to supplying 40% of the water needs for more than 10% of the state’s population which resides in our service area, groundwater is a safety valve for use in times of drought, sort of a water piggy bank. In the event that the Metropolitan Water District issues a formal drought declaration, WRD may take steps to allow additional groundwater pumping by businesses and residents to alleviate imported water shortages. At that point our water supply count-down begins,” said Katherman.

“While not minimizing the importance of the loss of imported water for replenishment for an entire year, and likely longer, the public should know that WRD has embarked on a program to achieve complete independence from imported water by 2015. Our goal is to replace imported sources of replenishment water with increased use of local supplies, and to increase the use of currently unused storage capacity right beneath our feet,” Katherman concluded.

The Water Replenishment District is a public agency governed by five publicly elected board members. The WRD refills and protects 10 aquifers stretching from the cities of Manhattan Beach to Whittier and Los Angeles to Long Beach. The aquifers store drinking water and are more than a quarter of a mile deep.



Drought along the San Gabriel River groundwater replenishment area



A wet period along the San Gabriel River groundwater replenishment area

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