



DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES

News Release

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**HAWAI‘I RESIDENTS AND BUSINESSES ASKED TO HELP CONSERVE WATER
DURING EL NIÑO DROUGHT CONDITIONS**

Extreme dry conditions also call for preventing wildfires

HONOLULU – The Commission on Water Resource Management (CWRM) is asking Hawai‘i residents and businesses to be conscious of drought conditions and to help conserve water as well as prevent wildfires. The current El Niño phenomenon created abnormally dry winter season conditions throughout the state and it is expected that dry conditions will continue through the spring season.

“Hawai‘i is suffering from drought and the current El Niño has exacerbated the situation,” said Ken Kawahara, Commission on Water Resource Management deputy director.

Rainfall across the state has been well below normal. The U.S. Drought Monitor shows that Hawai‘i is under drought conditions ranging from D0 (abnormally dry) to an unprecedented D4 (drought–exceptional) – some of the worst conditions in the country.

Agricultural producers are feeling the impacts of drastically reduced rainfall and some residents who normally rely on rainwater catchment are hauling water.

Governor Linda Lingle also joined in the call for water conservation. Last month, she sent letters to all state agencies to lead by example in encouraging water conservation measures.

“Drought impacts all sectors of the community and everyone can do their part so that we do not waste one of our most precious natural resources. I have asked all state agencies to conserve

water by being diligent in reporting and repairing leaks, and irrigating during the cooler morning hours," she said.

About half of the water use in the home is attributed to outdoor uses, including irrigation. Residents and businesses can help to save water by irrigating lawns between the hours of 5:00 p.m. and 9:00 a.m. to minimize evaporation and repairing any leaks or broken sprinkler heads. By using less water, residents can also reduce their sewer bills and save money.

Here are some other simple ways that residents can save water:

- Take shorter showers
- Turn the water off while brushing teeth or shaving
- Use the garbage can and not the toilet to dispose of trash
- Run dishwashers with a full load
- Wash only full loads of laundry
- Repair any leaks in your home or business
- Wash your vehicle with a bucket or use a hose end shutoff nozzle
- Check irrigation systems and hoses for leaks, proper sprinkler head adjustment, and timer settings
- Use a broom instead of water to clean your driveway

"By conserving water, we may be able to avoid mandatory water restrictions that could be imposed by the County water departments or private water utilities as we move into the drier months of the year," said Kawahara. "Use all the water you need, but please don't waste it."

Dry weather is also causing wildfire hazards across the islands and the National Weather Service last week issued red flag warnings indicating that critical fire weather conditions were occurring in some areas of the state.

"Everyone should be extremely careful with fires when enjoying the outdoors," said Kawahara, "Practically all wildfires in Hawai'i are caused by carelessness."

Campers and beach goers using hibachis and other barbeque grills should dispose of their spent briquettes in appropriate receptacles. Do not dispose of them at the base of a tree as it will kill it. Off-road vehicle enthusiasts should be aware that sparks thrown from a catalytic converter can start a wildfire. Call 911 immediately to report any and all fire activities that are of a suspicious nature.

To find out more ways to save water contact your local water utility or log on to their websites and log on to the Hawai'i Drought Monitor website at:

<http://hawaii.gov/dlnr/drought/preparedness.htm#waterconservation>.

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