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MERCED COUNTY ROLLS OUT DROUGHT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM, WEBPAGE

MERCED – In an effort to assist residents affected by the drought, Merced County went live with an overhauled version of its drought webpage this week and began accepting applications for emergency water delivery.

The website, www.co.merced.ca.us/savewater, serves as a one-stop hub of information for anyone affected by the drought. Information is available in more than 90 languages, including English, Spanish, Hmong and Punjabi. The site includes:

- General information about the drought,
- Information about the County's Emergency Water Distribution Program,
- A form to apply online for the Emergency Water Distribution Program,
- Information about low-interest loans and well financing options,
- The County's groundwater ordinance,
- General drought assistance information.

The County also set up a drought-assistance hotline for residents looking for information about issues related to the drought: **209-726-2705**. Callers will be provided basic information about how to apply online for the Emergency Water Distribution Program and will be able to connect with the Emergency Water Distribution Program provider, the Merced County Department of Public Health, Division of Environmental Health, or the Merced County Office of Emergency Services.

"We understand that a lot of people are experiencing hardships right now because of the ongoing drought," said John Pedrozo, Chairman of the Merced County Board of Supervisors. "At the County, we're taking strides to help those in need. The rollout of the Emergency Water Distribution Program and the unveiling of the revamped drought webpage are two examples of that."

The Emergency Water Distribution Program was developed to provide a temporary water source to homes with dry wells. If approved for services, households could receive deliveries of non-potable water at the rate of 50 gallons per person per day for health and sanitation purposes. Bottled water for drinking and cooking would also be provided at the rate of one gallon per person per day. The non-potable water would be delivered and pumped into a temporary water tank located on the subject property. To apply for temporary emergency water delivery, residents must:

1. Have the well verified as dry (this can be done through a well driller or pump company),
2. Have applied for a new well permit,
3. Have completed and submitted the application for temporary water delivery (see webpage for details).