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Pfizer La Jolla: Use of Recycled Water

Pfizer La Jolla is in a very arid region. Dry conditions, ongoing drought in the Colorado River basin, low reservoir levels, and a reduced snow pack have created many challenges for Pfizer La Jolla and the surrounding community.

A federal court has curtailed water deliveries from northern California due to environmental factors in the Sacramento San Joaquin Delta. And, after a record dry spring that dramatically reduced snow runoff from the Sierra Nevada Mountains, Governor Schwarzenegger declared an official statewide drought on June 4, 2008.

On June 1, 2009, the City of San Diego officially moved to a Level 2 Drought Alert. In a Level 2 alert all voluntary Level 1 conservation practices become mandatory (e.g., landscape irrigation reductions are in effect). If Southern California has another dry winter and spring, La Jolla may quickly move to Level 3, "drought critical", where a consumer demand reduction of up to 40% may be required.

Pfizer La Jolla EHS works with several local industry associations on the regulatory aspects of water conservation. By participating on these committees we are able to provide valuable input to the state regarding the impact of decreased water supplies on our business. Additionally, those companies following strict conservation methods and using recycled water for a major on-site process can apply for the City of San Diego's Guaranteed Water Program, helping ensure the business will not be impacted by future drought restrictions.

In 2006 the Pfizer La Jolla site went to 100% recycled water use for all irrigation and installed low-flow water fixtures in several areas. These measures reduced the Pfizer La Jolla campus reliance on potable water by 25%. In 2009 the site installed water conserving shower and faucet heads to further reduce reliance on potable water.

Recycled (or reclaimed) water is approved for several uses in the City of San Diego, including irrigation. It can also be approved for use in cooling towers and, if treated further, other non-contact uses on site.

Our La Jolla site continues to explore opportunities to reduce its water footprint in order to alleviate business continuity concerns and show leadership in environmental sustainability. A feasibility study is currently underway to explore on-site treatment options that would allow for much broader use of recycled water and potentially achieve significant reductions in potable water use.



Bidwell Bar Marina 2/4/2008
Note the lake level & docks



Bidwell Bar Marina 2/3/2009
Note the lower lake level & cramped positioning of the docks & boats