

For Immediate Release

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CENTRAL BASIN ASSISTS CITIES AND WATER UTILITIES IN PROTECTING RESIDENTS FROM UNLICENSED DOOR-TO-DOOR TOILET DIRECT INSTALL COMPANIES

Commerce, CA- Central Basin Municipal Water District is working with area cities and utilities to protect local residents against unlicensed contractors who are offering to replace homeowners' old toilets with high-efficiency toilets (HETs) and install them. The purchase and installation of HETs are free of charge.

Currently, the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD) offers rebate incentives on HETs and other water conservation devices for residents and businesses. With authorization, a third-party contractor can process a rebate form on a property owner's behalf and receive the rebate check.

While this rebate program has helped water districts, retailers and qualified, licensed contractors develop large-scale direct-installation programs for HETs and other devices, there is growing activity by unlicensed, unqualified contractors who are performing this work. Additionally, homeowners reportedly have been coerced into participating in the program, falsely told that the replacement of their old toilet is mandatory or part of a local water conservation ordinance.

In an effort to mitigate this activity within the Central Basin service area, the District will be increasing the prequalification requirements for all rebates processed by third-party contractors through the Metropolitan Water District's (MWD), Save-A-Buck and SoCal Water Smart programs to include the following:

- A State Contractor's License;
- Proof of liability insurance;
- Proof of workers compensation insurance; and
- A current City Business License as required from the municipality in which the service is being performed.

By taking this action, third-party contractors will have to show additional proof of qualifications before being able to process the MWD rebate application on behalf of any property owner.

"The ability for third party contractors to process rebates on behalf of a resident through this program is critical to making larger conservation projects possible," said Central Basin Board President Robert Apodaca. "In our experience, the rebate program for both the residential and

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business sectors has been very effective. It is unfortunate that these companies are taking advantage of a great program to make a profit, while doing work they are not qualified, or certified to do in the first place. All of this is at the expense of our local property owners.”

“Central Basin has been fielding calls from concerned city officials and water retailers about these companies going door-to-door,” continued Director Apodaca. “From what we’ve heard, installations done by these inexpert contractors are not done well, and there is no customer service or follow-up with residents. That’s not how Central Basin does business. If these contractors are wrongly associating themselves with us, then we have a problem.”

While Central Basin applauds the efforts of companies that are providing services to assist in water conservation, the District is also committed to responsible environmental leadership. “There are many good companies out there who are doing good work through Metropolitan’s rebate program,” continued Director Apodaca. “We just want to make sure residents are asking the right questions and getting the information they need so they are not victimized.”

Central Basin is a public agency that wholesales imported water to cities, mutual water companies, investor-owned utilities and private companies in southeast Los Angeles County, serving a population of more than 2 million. In addition, Central Basin provides the region with recycled water for municipal, commercial and industrial uses. Formed in 1952, Central Basin is committed to ensuring a safe and reliable water supply for the region. For more information please visit www.centralbasin.org.

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