

For Immediate Release
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DRINKING WATER SAFE

Natural algae bloom causes unpleasant taste and odor

LIVERMORE – Residents in Livermore, Pleasanton, Dublin and Dougherty Valley may have noticed an earthy-musty taste and odor to their water in recent days. But don't fret. It's a temporary condition caused by hot weather, and does not affect drinking-water safety.

Naturally occurring algae blooms in the Delta have been imparting an earthy-musty taste and odor to the Livermore-Amador Valley's imported drinking water supplies. The valley's Zone 7 Water Agency removes the algae when it treats the water, but the taste and odor may linger. Zone 7 on Friday morning began to further treat its imported surface water supplies with Powdered Activated Carbon, which removes some of the taste- and odor-causing compounds. Despite their unpleasantness, those compounds do not impact the safety of valley drinking water.

The taste and odor are caused by algae blooms due to warmer temperatures and increased exposure to sunlight of the source water supplies. "Taste and odor problems during the warm summer months are not uncommon for the numerous agencies that receive their water from the Delta," said Zone 7 General Manager Dale Myers. "The taste and odor episodes do not affect the safety of the drinking water. The water continues to meet state and federal safety standards and is absolutely safe to drink."

Although Powdered Activated Carbon is useful for treating temporary taste and odor episodes, it will not alleviate the problem completely. Zone 7 is currently planning to install more effective treatment processes at its surface water treatment plants, which are expected to be online by 2011 at a cost of \$6 million. All taste and odor projects will be funded with water rates and connection fees on new development. Zone 7 is also continuing its effort to work closely with local, state and federal agencies to help maintain and improve source water quality in the Delta and the South Bay Aqueduct.

It is uncertain how long the current taste and odor event will last. In addition to the treatment provided at the surface water treatment plants, residents can further improve the taste and odor of their tap water by cooling it before drinking or running it through a carbon filter available at most drug stores. Squeezing a few drops of lemon in water also can help.

Surface water from the Delta constitutes about 75 percent of the treated water that Zone 7 delivers to the cities of Livermore, Pleasanton, Dougherty Valley and Dublin. The rest of the treated water is supplied by local groundwater.

Consumers interested in receiving additional information about their tap water may receive a copy of the annual water quality report by contacting Zone 7 at www.zone7water.com or their local water retailer: City of Pleasanton at (925) 931-5510, City of Livermore (925) 960-8100, Dublin-San Ramon Services District at (925) 875-2295, or California Water Service at (925) 447-4900.

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Zone 7 Water Agency is one of the 10 active zones of the Alameda County Flood Control and Water Conservation District. The District was established by the State Legislature in October 1949 to solve problems of flooding, drainage, channel erosion and water supply and conservation in Alameda County. A seven-member board of directors governs Zone 7. Along with flood control, Zone 7 supplies water to all of eastern Alameda County and a population of more than 183,000. Treated water is sold wholesale to local retailers, including the cities of Livermore and Pleasanton, the Dublin San Ramon Services District, and the California Water Service Company. Zone 7 also distributes untreated water to local agriculture operations and golf courses.