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L.A. County, L.A. Cities and Environmental Groups Announce New Roadmap for Historic Scaling Up of Decentralized, Alternate Water Supplies

Indoor and Outdoor Non-Potable Water Uses Streamlined – Rainwater, Graywater, Stormwater, Blackwater

Feb. 16, 2016 (LOS ANGELES, CA) If the drought ended this year, Californians would be thrilled; but it wouldn't change the need for what most now realize is a scaling up of, and innovative approaches to, different types of water sources. This morning, representatives from Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, City of Los Angeles Bureau of Sanitation, City of Santa Monica Office of Sustainability and the Environment, TreePeople, Heal the Bay, and Natural Resources Defense Council presented the new roadmap that, for the first time, gives municipalities, businesses and homeowners clear guidelines on how they can significantly contribute to L.A. County's water management and planning through the use of non-potable water both outdoors and indoors.

These voluntary guidelines for non-potable water use are a first of their kind for L.A. County, and possibly across the state of California.

With Southern California still importing 80% of its water, the release of the new multi-agency approved roadmap for L.A. County, *Guidelines for Alternate Water Sources -- Indoor and Outdoor Non-Potable Uses* (aka Matrix 2.0), is now a key piece of the puzzle in creating the next generation of a sustainable water supply that includes critical water reuse projects such as more decentralized water supply systems to promote water self-sufficiency / sustainability, and to reduce potable water use.

Non-potable water is defined as water not intended for drinking. Sources for on-site non-potable water include, but are not limited to, graywater, rainwater, stormwater, blackwater, cooling tower blow-down water, condensate, and foundation drainage.

"We are very excited about this next phase. One of our roles as the Dept. of Public Health is to ensure the safe use of alternate water sources (AWS) by ensuring that such systems are designed and operated in a manner to deliver appropriate water quality," states Terri Williams, Acting Director of Environmental Health for the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health. "With Matrix 2.0, we want to change the conversation from 'Will you allow the use of AWS on this project?' to 'How can we safely use AWS on this project?'"

The Matrix 2.0:

- Provides governments with a real, tangible standard to follow for collection and

treatment, giving the public a way to design a non-potable water system that can actually be approved for use.

- Safeguards the public health while promoting decentralized, on-site alternative water use.
- Establishes monitoring and testing parameters to ensure a system functions over time.
- Compliments standards found in the NPDES Clean Water Act permit and EWMPS (enhanced watershed management plans) water quality standards through the use of non-potable water.
- Develops a simple, effective process of approving plans and inspecting systems to encourage the public to build the systems, and allow jurisdictions to approve them.

By using Matrix 2.0 guidelines, the end user can:

- Save money and energy resources by expanding use of alternate water to indoor uses, in addition to outdoor use.
- Harvest rainwater on-site to eliminate runoff, which carries pollution to the ocean.

States TreePeople founder Andy Lipkis, "We are in a long-term water crisis, as well as a short-term drought emergency, so it's vital that our cities and property owners share stewardship in developing alternative, non-potable, on-site water supplies and uses that can reduce the need for expensive new potable water."

The presentation was held at the City of Santa Monica's Pico Branch Library, which boasts an underground cistern project that supplies water for *indoor toilet flushing*. States Joel Cesare, Sustainable Building Advisor for the City of Santa Monica, "The Matrix 2.0 represents a watershed moment in the evolution of southern California green building, and the library's cistern is a perfect example. No longer will building projects be hindered by regulatory gaps or enforcement inconsistency with regards to alternate water reuse strategies. Our challenge is clear: we live in a growing region where the resource of water is only becoming scarcer. This groundbreaking, inter-agency effort will unlock innovation and create design opportunities so our buildings can be dramatically more resilient and water efficient."

An early morning tour of additional sites demonstrated success with on-site water sources: a new Expo Line station with a cistern that will collect water for irrigation and equipment parts cleaning; the Loews Hotel's graywater laundry water recycling system (see [VIDEO](#)); and the Penmar Water Quality Improvement Project, the largest stormwater cistern in L.A. County (see [VIDEO](#)). According to Williams, some notable projects proposing to use AWS for indoor use include the retrofitting of a Beverly Hills hotel, a multi-tower development in downtown Los Angeles consisting of condos, hotel, and retail space, and the new Santa Monica City Services Building.

Matrix 2.0 builds on the original Matrix (2011), which focused solely on the *outdoor* uses of rainwater, stormwater and dry weather runoff harvest and use. Many changes have occurred since 2011, including laws expanding the definition of AWS to include new sources, allowing expanded use of AWS including within buildings for flushing restroom fixtures, and new standards for water quality pertaining to AWS, which necessitated the need for updating the matrix.

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