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Aquarion's Recent Infrastructure Investments Helping to Manage the Current Drought.

HINGHAM, MA. – Many of the recent water supply infrastructure investments made by Aquarion over the past 2 years are paying off in dividends. Despite a statewide drought causing unseasonably low groundwater levels, new pumps, pipes, and instrumentation is helping Aquarion manage its sources and meet demands. Bigger pumps and pipes have allowed Aquarion to readily meet peak hourly demands. New flow meter and water level instruments have allowed operations staff to monitor groundwater levels and pumping rates in real time and use this information to optimize their sources.

“Groundwater levels across the region, including our water supply wells, are unseasonably low at this time due to lower than normal precipitation,” said Stephen Olson, Aquarion’s Director of Operations for Massachusetts

In an effort to keep local officials and environmental groups updated about the impact the drought is having on the local water supply, Aquarion Water Company invited public officials in from Hingham, Hull and Cohasset to provide an overview on the water supply and answer questions.

The meeting, held at Aquarion’s water treatment plant, was attended by more than 20 representatives from the three towns, including Selectmen, Town Officials, Fire and Police Chiefs.

Olson noted that on Aug. 12, the Massachusetts Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs upgraded the drought status for the northeast region of the state to a Drought Warning. Areas within the Drought Warning, including the Hingham water system, are currently experiencing precipitation levels 5 to 8 inches below normal.

Olson noted the company recently implemented a ban on all outdoor watering except for watering with hand held hoses. “Outdoor water restrictions are one of the most effective conservation measures to reduce water use,” said Olson. Since implementing a ban on

August 2nd, demand for water has dropped more than 20 percent from 5.2 million gallons per day down to 4.1 million gallons per day on average. Olson added, “the water study we commissioned last year concluded that a targeted approach has the greatest potential for water saving, particularly from reductions in outdoor use.” Olson also indicated “Aquarion has had no problem keeping up with the water demands this summer before implementing the recent ban in large part due to our significant investments in the infrastructure over the past two years.”

Olson also provided an update on enforcement of the outdoor watering ban, explaining that while Aquarion officials must actually witness watering to be able to shutoff those customers who are violating the ban, the company has sent numerous warning letters out based on tips from the general public. Olson noted that much of the enforcement has been focused on a public education and awareness campaign through the newspapers and social media and direct outreach targeted to their top water users. A study on water system losses, customer water use, and potential water savings completed by Aquarion last year determined that 1% of single family residential customers use a disproportionate volume of water. For example, the average family of four in Hingham, Hull and Cohasset uses approximately 250 gallons per day, while the top 1% uses more than five times the amount or 1,320 gallons per day.

Aquarion initiated a water conservation measure on May 1 this year that limited households to watering twice a week. On August 2, Aquarion implemented a ban on outdoor watering in Hingham, Hull and parts of Cohasset, with the exception of using a hand held hose, which is currently allowed. These restrictions were implemented to ensure there is sufficient water for everyday water usage in the event that the dry conditions continue.

About Aquarion Water Company of Massachusetts:

A division of Aquarion Water Company, Aquarion Water Company of Massachusetts is the public water supply company for more than 50,000 people in the towns of Hingham, Hull, Cohasset, Millbury, and Oxford. Aquarion Water Company is the largest investor-owned water utility in New England and among the seven largest in the United States. Based in Bridgeport, Conn., it has been in the public water supply business since 1857. Across its operations, Aquarion is a responsible steward of the environment and assists the communities it serves in promoting sustainable practices.

For more information on Aquarion Water Company, please visit www.aquarionwater.com.

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