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10.3.2016

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Water Ban Working As Demand For Water Has Dropped 35 Percent Since The Ban Was Implemented

HINGHAM, MA. – Since a mandatory watering ban was put in place on August 2nd, demand for water has dropped 35 percent as the majority of residents in Hingham, Hull and North Cohasset have taken the extreme drought conditions seriously.

We've had a great response, as most residents have responded well to a mix of educational and awareness messages, according to Aquarion Water Company, as residents curbed usage, saving more than a million gallons a day since the ban was initiated.

Year to date, Aquarion has seen a 26 percent drop in usage from this same time a year ago.

“A majority of our customers are adhering to the water ban and are taking this drought seriously,” said Steve Olson, director of operation for Massachusetts at Aquarion Water Company.

Virtually all water conservation efforts depend on public awareness and understanding of the need for conservation. Without adequate knowledge, water users lack an understanding of the issue and the ability to put conservation measures and practices into place.

“Our water conservation program is comprised of multiple components. One of the most critical components of the program is the robust education and outreach program that reaches school children and adults across all three of the communities we serve,” said Olson.

Aquarion has also held a number of informational meetings with stakeholders, community groups, local officials, and residents to help them understand the severity of the drought and ways they can help create awareness about the importance of water conservation. Aquarion has identified its highest volume users, mailed them letters and called them on the telephone to inform them about the drought and the water ban

restrictions.

A recent study on water usage completed by Aquarion last year determined that these high water-using residents have the greatest potential for savings from conservation, particularly from reductions in outdoor use. Since implementing the ban, enforcement steps have been taken which include over 50 water ban reminder letters being sent out based on tips received, as well as more than 30 first warning letters that outline the policy and can lead to water service being shut off. Olson notes that in order for Aquarion to shut water service off, the company must witness a water ban violation after a warning letter has been sent.

Aquarion has also targeted neighborhoods with green lawns sending out a “water patrol” during the early morning when most irrigation systems are programmed to turn on.

Olson said the company has followed up with numerous tips regarding observations of irrigation systems running and is working closely with the Town Boards of Health to document the use of private wells.

Although the use of private wells is not controlled by Aquarion, home owners with private wells are encouraged to refrain from irrigating as Aquarion’s wells may be drawing from the same aquifer.

The best way to continue to build public awareness and understanding is to offer education on water conservation throughout the year. Aquarion has partnered with Holly Hill Farm and the North & South Rivers Watershed Association (NSRWA) to help fund 2nd and 5th grade education programs to all Hingham and Hull children. Aquarion also supports the Greenscapes Massachusetts Coalition (www.greenscapes.org) in coordination with NSRWA.

Despite some precipitation that occurred last week, September produced only 35-40 percent of what is considered “normal” rainfall for the month leaving the region 1.96 inches below average while precipitation for the year remains 12.25 inches below normal as drought 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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