



Media Contact:

Kimy Wall | 951-296-6933 | wallk@ranchowater.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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New Legislation Could Make Rancho Water Customers' Turf Replacement Dollars Go Further

Temecula, Calif. – Since 2014, more than five million square feet of turf have been removed from the Rancho California Water District's (Rancho Water/District) service area, providing stunning drought-tolerant landscapes throughout the community. Through the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD), Rancho Water offers rebates to incentivize turf removal. This week, the Legislature passed a bill that would make turf replacement dollars stretch even further by making these rebates tax-exempt. As a result of this effort, residents could save water by removing turf and installing drought-tolerant landscaping without worrying about their rebates being considered taxable income by California.

Assembly Bill (AB) 2142 (Gabriel) passed out of the Legislature and now awaits a signature by Governor Newsom. AB 2142 reinstates a California law that was sunset in December 2019, which exempts turf rebates from taxable income. This tax exemption would be in line with other similar, permanent exemptions such as rebates for water efficient toilets, washing machines, and fixtures.

As Californians face low water levels within the State Water Project and Colorado River, the two main sources for imported water, local agencies like Rancho Water are encouraging their customers to save water by replacing portions of their lawns with low-water-use plants that can withstand the hotter, drier climate and reduced irrigation. The MWD Turf Replacement program offers money back (\$2 per square foot for residential customers and \$3 per square foot for commercial customers) for removing existing grass.

"Turf replacement is an important component in achieving California's long-term water sustainability goals. The tax exemption created by AB 2142 helps to encourage participation in our turf replacement program," said Rancho Water General Manager Robert Grantham. "The creative, drought-tolerant landscape designs we have seen from our residential and HOA customers are not only water conscious, but have enhanced the beauty of our community."

Rancho Water encourages customers to utilize water use efficiency measures like checking for leaks around their house and taking shorter showers in order to meet Governor Newsom's call for 15% water use reduction while also mitigating the effects of the drought.

For more information about converting your garden to a drought-tolerant landscape and finding available rebates, visit RanchoWater.com/wue. To read the proposed AB 2142 in its entirety, visit [Income taxes: exclusion: turf replacement water conservation program](#).

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About Rancho California Water District: The mission of Rancho Water is to deliver reliable, high-quality water, wastewater, and reclamation services to its customers and communities in a prudent and sustainable manner. Rancho Water is a local, independent Special District, organized on August 16, 1965, servicing approximately 150 square miles and about 45,000 service connections in Temecula, Murrieta, and parts of unincorporated Riverside County.



Rancho Water | 42135 Winchester Rd., Temecula, CA 92590

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