



News Release

EMBAGOED TILL 06:00 HRS, 1 September 2006

THAMES WATER WITHDRAWS APPLICATION FOR LONDON DROUGHT ORDER

Customer savings helping to ease water shortages

Thames Water announced today that it has withdrawn its application to Defra for a Drought Order for London.

The company has also thanked customers for their efforts to reduce water use and appealed to them to continue the good work, as the long-term drought is far from over.

The company's Environment Director, Richard Aylard, said: "There is still a drought, but it isn't getting any worse, and we don't need to bring in any more restrictions beyond the existing hosepipe and sprinkler ban.

"The situation has changed since we applied for a Drought Order for London on 26 June. We took that decision as a sensible precaution, because there was a possibility that we might need to bring in additional restrictions. We planned on the basis that getting a Drought Order could take up to 12 weeks, and we had to keep in mind that we might receive as little as half the average rainfall over that period.

"We said at the time that if we had anything like a normal English summer it was unlikely that we would need these extra restrictions. Since then we have seen close to average rainfall in July, and slightly above average in August.

"Just as importantly, the response from our customers has been magnificent. In July, despite the very hot weather, they saved 258 million litres a day – a fall in demand of 8% compared to last year.

Thames Water
Clearwater Court
Vastern Road
Reading
RG1 8DB

T www.thames-water.com

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“Our London reservoirs are now at 78% of capacity, which is actually higher than at the same time in two of the last three years.

“The short-term threat has receded enough for us not to need a Drought Order in 2006, but the underlying situation remains serious. Two successive dry winters have left groundwater levels in much of the region very low.

“A third successive dry winter would make the situation worse and – depending on the amount of rain we receive - could mean that we need to apply again for a Drought Order early in 2007. This makes it even more important that we all continue to use water wisely and review the situation regularly.

“We are pressing ahead with work to replace London’s leakiest Victorian water mains, with more than 1,000 people working at around 30 sites across the capital.”

The hosepipe and sprinkler ban introduced in April will remain in place across the Thames Water region until there has been sufficient rainfall to replenish groundwater and surface water supplies.

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For more information, please contact Thames Water’s Press Office: 0118 373 8924/21

Notes to Editors:

- The drought began in November 2004, since when there have been only two months of above average rainfall. The first six months of 2006 saw only 76% of expected rainfall.
- Thames Water introduced a hosepipe and sprinkler ban in April, which prevents the use of hosepipes and sprinklers to water private gardens or to wash private cars.
- Rainfall in the Thames Water region was 91% of the long-term average in July and 105% in August (up to 29 August).



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