



Santa Fe Irrigation District

April 25, 2006

Santa Fe Irrigation District
858.756.2424

Michael J. Bardin
General Manager

Notice to All Customers of Santa Fe Irrigation District and San Dieguito Water District Water Safe to Drink Despite Musty Odor/Taste

Customers of Santa Fe Irrigation District (SFID) may have noticed a slight earthy or musty taste or odor in their tap water over the last two weeks. The taste and odor change is a result of seasonal biological changes in our local water source, Lake Hodges.

The taste and odor changes result when the lake water temperature rises and causes the release of low levels of compounds (Geosmin and 2-MIB). These compounds are produced when certain algae grows and then decomposes in lake waters. Fortunately, these compounds do not pose a health risk, although they do impart an earthy, musty taste and odor in our water even at their current very low concentrations (between 5 and 15 parts per trillion). By comparison, a part per trillion is equivalent to just 10 drops of Geosmin in enough water to fill the Rose Bowl. These compounds are difficult to completely remove in our treatment process.

In response to this issue, we have taken several steps. First, we have put this water through water quality tests as we do with all of the water we treat. Laboratory testing of both the raw and treated water confirms that the water is safe to drink and complies with all State and Federal Drinking Water Standards. Second, we have adjusted the point in the lake at which we are drawing the water so that we are now pulling water from deeper outlets that are not impacted by this algae bloom. With these actions, we want our customers to know that their water is safe and that they should see an improvement in water quality over the next two weeks.

Customers can also take some interim measures to reduce the taste and odor in the drinking water. Customers can refrigerate the water in an open container to help the odor evaporate, add ice cubes as cold water tastes better than warm water, or add a few drops of lemon juice to the water. Home

treatment devices that use granular-activated carbon are also effective in reducing these taste/odor compounds.

Similar odors were noticed by other water agencies in San Diego County last year when we received water from Metropolitan Water District (MWD) that contained MIB and Geosmin. MWD, a water wholesaler, provides San Diego County with imported water from the Colorado River and Northern California. MWD manages local storage reservoirs in Riverside, Los Angeles, and Orange County and has experienced similar problems with its water sources. This is not an uncommon problem.

Within the next two years Lake Hodges will be integrated into the County Water Authority's (CWA's) Emergency Storage Project (ESP). CWA's ESP comprises a system of reservoirs, interconnected pipelines and pumping stations designed to make water available to the San Diego region in the event of an interruption in imported water deliveries. We are hopeful that improved management of the Lake Hodges watershed and Lake resulting from this project will minimize future algae blooms that may impact the taste and odor of the water supplied to our customers. Additional information on the Emergency Storage Project can be found at the following web site: <http://www.sdcwa.org/infra/cip-esp.phtml>

If you have any questions regarding the quality of water delivered, please contact Cor Shaffer, R.E. Badger Filtration Plant Manager at 858.756.2569.

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