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49 Million Gallons of Water Lost in Vandalism Attack Against Alameda County Water District

Fremont, CA – On Thursday, the Alameda County Water District was the victim of an act of vandalism that destroyed district equipment and resulted in the loss of nearly 50 million gallons of water.

Fremont Police believe that the perpetrators entered a restricted area sometime on Thursday morning and intentionally damaged an inflatable dam on Alameda Creek. The dam, which is instrumental to the district's water supply operations, suffered irreversible damage.

More than 150 acre-feet of water – or 49 million gallons – washed past the destroyed dam and into the San Francisco Bay. The water was to have been percolated into the Niles Cone Groundwater Basin for use by residents and businesses in Fremont, Newark, and Union City as a critical water supply.

This amount of water is enough to supply the needs of approximately 500 homes for one year.

District staff was able to quickly open upstream diversions, allowing water which would have been impounded behind the dam to flow into nearby groundwater recharge facilities, thus eliminating further water loss.

“This is a very significant loss of water under any circumstances, and more so in the drought conditions we are experiencing,” said ACWD General Manager Robert Shaver. “It is an utterly senseless, destructive, and wasteful thing to do.”

While the water loss was substantial, the District does not believe it will have a long-term impact on its water supply operations. ACWD delivers more than 47,000 acre-feet of water each year to more than 81,000 homes and businesses in the tri-city area. An acre-foot of water is the amount needed to cover one acre of land to a depth of one foot, or 325,850 gallons.

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District staff also has begun work on securing a replacement for the dam, which was constructed in 1971. Because of the dam's age, much of the work of identifying vendors and equipment already was underway.

The vandalized dam is one of a pair ACWD maintains on Alameda Creek. The dams are large, heavy-duty devices, which can be inflated to impound needed water or deflated to allow water to flow through the creek in storm conditions.

This crime is under investigation by the Fremont Police Department, and ACWD is providing information and assistance wherever possible. Anyone with information about this crime is encouraged to contact Detective A. Cenicerros at Acenicerros@fremont.gov or (510) 790-6900.

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For 100 years, the Alameda County Water District has supplied water to the residents and businesses of southern Alameda County. ACWD supplies drinking water to the more than 340,000 people living in the cities of Fremont, Newark, and Union City. For more information, please visit www.acwd.org.