



No Health Risks Related to Unusual Taste and Odor in Water

Dear Valued Customers:

Please know that all water supplies provided by the Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District, Improvement District No.1 (District) **remain safe for consumption and use despite an unusual taste or odor that may be detected by some consumers.** On August 23, 2022, the District transitioned from using local well water to using State Water Project (SWP) supplies for a portion of our service area. Typically every year, the District uses SWP supplies to serve seasonally higher demands, which allows us to relax production from the upland groundwater basin and wells in the Santa Ynez River alluvium. The District receives its SWP supplies from the Central Coast Water Authority (CCWA).

This year, soon after transitioning to SWP supplies, the District received notification from CCWA that high temperatures and drought conditions have created ideal conditions for blue-green algae blooms in surface waters such as the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, which serves as a conveyance hub for SWP supplies. Accordingly, the District and other water purveyors that take SWP deliveries from CCWA can be affected by these conditions. The unusual taste or odors that some may detect are due to byproducts of the blue-green algae, namely “Geosmin and MIB” which are naturally occurring compounds **that do not present any health risk to consumers.**

Different individuals may have varying levels of sensitivity to Geosmin and MIB. Some people do not detect any change at all, while others experience an unpleasant taste or odor. Notably, those who are sensitive to the compounds can be very sensitive, where some can detect an earthy or musty taste and/or smell at concentrations down to 5-10 parts per trillion (which translates to 5-10 drops in a stadium full of water).

CCWA is increasing its water monitoring and testing, and has initiated a powder activated carbon dosing process to provide additional treatment of the SWP supplies being delivered to the District. CCWA has indicated that they will continue to provide treatment for Geosmin and MIB until the levels drop to an acceptable level. In the meantime, customers can refrigerate an open pitcher of water or add citrus to minimize taste and odor concerns that may be experienced.

If you have any questions regarding this notice, please contact the District’s Water Resources Manager at (805) 688-6015. For additional information regarding SWP supplies, or Geosmin and MIB in particular, please contact the Central Coast Water Authority at (805) 688-2292.

The District proudly serves potable water supplies for domestic, agricultural, commercial, and institutional needs within the communities of Santa Ynez, Los Olivos, Ballard, the Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians, and the City of Solvang on a limited basis.

For more information about the District, please visit our website at www.syrwd.org