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DEP ADVISES RESIDENTS STATEWIDE TO CONSERVE WATER IN AFTERMATH OF STORM

(12/P129) TRENTON - The Department of Environmental Protection is strongly advising residents statewide to conserve water in the wake of Hurricane Sandy because widespread power outages have forced many public and private water utilities to use emergency generators to treat and pump water.

"Power companies are working hard to restore electricity to water utilities, but right now it's impossible to say how long these facilities will have to be operated on backup generators," Commissioner Martin said. "Everyone must pitch in immediately and take steps to reduce water consumption. Without conservation now, homes and businesses could find themselves without water in the near future if backup generation fails. We need full and immediate cooperation."

The DEP is currently assessing the extent to which water utilities are currently using backup power, however it currently appears that most of the major water utilities in the state are currently using some degree of backup generation. The DEP is in contact with water purveyors across New Jersey.

New Jersey American Water Co., the state's largest private water company, has issued a statement urging all of its customers statewide to conserve water indefinitely as many of the company's facilities are operating on emergency generators.

"We are working with the power companies to have power fully restored at all of our pumping stations and water treatment plants, and ask that our customers discontinue non-essential water use until further notice," said Stephen P. Schmitt, vice president of operations for New Jersey American Water. "Voluntary water conservation reduces the demand on the water system while it operates on backup power. We thank our customers in advance for their cooperation in conserving water while power is being restored to their homes and to our facilities."

In the aftermath of the storm, water service for New Jersey American Water customers has not been interrupted.

The DEP advises residents to adhere to the following:

- * Do not use water for any nonessential uses, such as watering of lawns and washing of cars.
- * Take showers instead of baths. Keep showers as short as possible.
- * Limit flushing of toilets, dishwashing and washing clothes.
- * Turn off the faucet when shaving and brushing teeth.
- * For those who have electrical service, run dishwashers and laundry washing machines only when they are full. If you have a water-saver cycle, use it.
- * Check your toilet, faucets, and pipes for leaks and make repairs or shut off water valves to any faucets or toilets that are leaking.
- * Use a broom or rake to clean up storm debris, including leaves or pine needles, rather than a hose.
- * Keep a supply of drinking water on hand sufficient to last several days.