

**FOR RELEASE: Immediate**

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## ONWASA ASKS CUSTOMERS TO USE WATER WISELY

Abnormally dry weather has caused extreme water demand in the Onslow Water and Sewer Authority's customer service area. This high demand has prompted ONWASA to request that customers use water wisely and voluntarily conserve water where possible.

The National Weather Service in Newport has confirmed that 2019 has been a very dry year for the ONWASA service area. Jacksonville weather station statistics show that January was 36.99% below normal, February 77.26% below normal, March 53.58% below normal, April 22.44% below normal, and May 66.83% below normal.

This abnormally dry, hot weather coupled with a robust tourist season has resulted in demand for water topping 13.5 million gallons on Memorial Day. By comparison, average water demand in May of 2018 was only 8.6 million gallons and May of 2019 was 10.4 million gallons.

ONWASA is utilizing all wells, pumps, and production plants at full capacity and have met demand thus far, but some areas have reported reduced pressure. By Monday evening, ONWASA's stored water had fallen from 16.1 million gallons to 6.3 million gallons. There are no major water main breaks or equipment failures. The drop is simply due to high customer demand.

While ONWASA is in the process of constructing 6 new high-capacity wells and has plans for larger main trunk lines, that additional capacity will not be available this summer. Therefore, customers are asked to voluntarily conserve water where possible by doing such things as:

- ✓ Limiting car washing to once per week.
- ✓ Voluntarily limit lawn and garden watering.
- ✓ Do not wash down outside areas such as sidewalks, patios, parking lots, service bays, aprons, etc.
- ✓ Do not leave faucets running while shaving or rinsing dishes.
- ✓ Water trees and shrubs to the minimum required amount, reusing water or using rain barrels when possible.
- ✓ Limit use of clothes washers and dishwashers and, when used, operate fully loaded.
- ✓ Limit flushing of toilets by multiple usages.
- ✓ Use flow-restrictive and water-saving devices.

There are no special conservation rates or penalties at this time. The conservation is voluntary only. ONWASA is hopeful that our area will receive much-needed rain soon. But until such time as weather conditions change and demand lowers, the utility asks that customers simply use water wisely.

ONWASA is the 10<sup>th</sup> largest public water utility in the state, and is the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest water authority with a population served of over 140,000 persons.

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