

News for Immediate Release

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Metropolitan doubles turf rebate for businesses, institutions that replace grass with sustainable landscaping

\$7 per-square-foot rebate starts Sept. 1, helps non-residential properties comply with new state law banning use of potable water on nonfunctional turf

Note to editors: B-roll of American Legion's Turf Replacement project, and other conservation-related video is available [here](#).

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Southern California businesses, schools, HOAs and other institutions that replace their water-intensive grass with more sustainable landscaping can get twice as much financial support from the Metropolitan Water District starting Monday (Sept. 1). The agency announced today that it is increasing its [turf replacement rebate](#) for non-residential property owners to \$7 per square foot of grass removed – the highest amount ever offered regionwide.

The increased rebate is part of Metropolitan's ongoing effort to boost water-efficiency in homes and businesses across Southern California, helping ensure the region has the water it needs as the climate changes. It will also help businesses and institutions comply with a new state law prohibiting the use of potable water on grass that is not used for recreation or other purposes – also known as nonfunctional turf – on most non-residential properties beginning in 2027.

"Southern California's landscape is changing. But looking around you still see a challenge everywhere – grass that isn't played on, or picnicked on, or even walked on except when it is being mowed. It's outside large buildings, in business parks, on medians," said Michael Camacho, vice chair of Metropolitan's Board of Directors. "This rebate helps these properties comply with the new state mandates while also switching to an alternative that is water-efficient, beautiful and supports our local ecosystems."

The increased rebate is made possible through a \$30 million grant from California's Department of Water Resources and \$96 million in federal funding through the Bureau of Reclamation's Lower Colorado Basin System Conservation and Efficiency Program.

"DWR is proud to continue its investment and support of programs like regional turf replacement that offer solutions to stretch California's limited water supplies," said Salomon Miranda, Water Manager at DWR's Southern Region Office. "By making turf replacement more affordable through increased rebates, we are improving water supply reliability and ensuring that water is available for residential needs, manufacturing, agriculture, and the environment."

The increased rebate was announced today in Los Angeles at the new [water-efficient garden](#) at American Legion Post 43, which was recently celebrated with a [One Water Award](#) from Metropolitan for its beautiful and water-saving landscape transformation.

Up to 70% of the water used in Southern California is used on outdoor irrigation. To lower this use, Metropolitan has for more than 15 years incentivized residents and businesses to replace their grass lawns with more water-efficient landscaping. Sustainable landscaping, with a water-efficient irrigation system, uses up to 80% less water compared to a traditional lawn.

Since its start, the Turf Replacement Program has had great success, directly resulting in the removal of more than 230 million square feet of grass. Annually, that saves enough water to meet the demands of more than 83,000 homes. In addition, a study found a "multiplier effect" in which for every 100 homes that converted their yards using a Metropolitan rebate, an additional 132 nearby homes were inspired to convert their own grass without receiving a rebate to help fund the projects.

"Southern Californians are eager to transform their yards to beautiful, low-water landscapes," said Metropolitan's Water Efficiency Manager Elise Goldman. "But the transformation has been a bit slower among businesses and institutions. The people who manage these properties need to make a business case for turf replacement. They need to understand how switching to a water-efficient landscape helps their bottom line. That's why this rebate increase is so valuable – it can kickstart landscape transformation projects in this sector, ultimately saving a lot of water."

According to a recent assessment, there are approximately 20,000 acres of nonfunctional turf in Southern California. Though not all of it is irrigated with potable water, eliminating it could save more than 100,000 acre-feet of water (an acre-foot is approximately 326,000 gallons, enough water to serve roughly three Southern California households for a year).

The increased rebate expires at the end of 2026, or sooner if funding runs out, so businesses and institutions are encouraged to apply by March 1 and must complete their projects within 180 days. Additional program details:

- Businesses and institutions must submit an application before starting their project.
- Projects must include a minimum of three water-efficient plants per 100 square feet of grass removed, a stormwater retention feature, and a water-efficient irrigation system. Synthetic turf is not allowed.
- To apply or get more information, including design resources, plant lists, and a list of certified landscapers, visit bewaterwise.com.

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The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California is a state-established cooperative that, along with its 26 cities and retail suppliers, provide water for 19 million people in six counties. The district imports water from the Colorado River and Northern California to supplement local supplies, and helps its members to develop increased water conservation, recycling, storage and other resource-management programs.