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*** PRESS RELEASE ***



Mayor Gavin Newsom Launches Rainwater Harvesting Initiative to Help Green the City, Conserve Water Amidst Drought & Protect San Francisco Bay & Pacific Ocean



Initiative Features Discounted Rain barrel Partnership with Cole Hardware and New City Rules Allowing Rainwater Capture for Irrigation, Non-Potable Indoor Use

SAN FRANCISCO, CA - In an effort to further conserve San Francisco's pristine drinking water supply amidst a statewide drought, support sustainable greening of city yards and spaces, and help divert storm water runoff from the City's sewer system, San Francisco Bay and the Pacific Ocean, Mayor Gavin Newsom today launched a new citywide initiative promoting "rainwater harvesting" - the collection and re-use of rainwater for non-drinking purposes like outdoor irrigation and indoor toilet use.

"Rainwater harvesting is a simple, safe, and sustainable way to help conserve our precious drinking water supplies, green our City and protect our environment," said Mayor Newsom. "This initiative alone won't end the drought or fix our climate crisis, but reviving this ancient practice can be part of the solution to our modern challenges."



"A 60-gallon rain barrel is really just a starting point for most people," said SFPUC General Manager Ed Harrington. "We're hoping that as people get more comfortable with the concept, they will want to add more rain barrels or install a larger rainwater harvesting system to fit their needs."



Accompanied by students at Cesar Chavez Elementary School in San Francisco who demonstrated their school garden rainwater harvesting project, Mayor Newsom signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC), the Department of Public Health and the Department of Building Inspection clarifying the standards for permissible rainwater harvesting systems and re-use of rainwater for non-drinking water uses without treatment.



Rainwater harvesting is the practice of capturing rainwater that runs off hard surfaces like roofs. Although the practice originated thousands of years ago, it is uncommon in urban areas served by municipal water sources.

In the second year of a drought, and as the Bay Area and entire state push for greater conservation and new alternative water sources, rainwater harvesting offers a simple way to conserve limited drinking water supplies. San Francisco's combined sewer system, which treats both stormwater and sanitary sewage, will also benefit from increased rainwater system installation through minimized neighborhood flooding and reduced combined sewer discharges into the San Francisco Bay or Pacific Ocean during very major winter storms.



To jumpstart the new initiative, Mayor Newsom also announced a new pilot program offering San Franciscans their first fully outfitted 60-gallon rain barrel at a steeply discounted price of \$69.99. The \$60 discount was made possible through a subsidy provided by the SFPUC and a price reduction by Cole Hardware. Individuals can go to any one of the local Cole Hardware stores to sign up for the program. Valid California identification displaying a San Francisco address or current utility bill with a San Francisco address matching the CA identification name must be provided to qualify for the program.

To learn more about rainwater harvesting and rain barrel installations, San Francisco residents can also attend a workshop at the SFPUC's "Big Blue Bucket" Eco-Fair on Saturday, October 11 from 10am - 2pm, located at Jerrold Ave. and Phelps St. A limited number of free rain barrels will be raffled away to workshop attendees. Workshops will be held at 10:30 am, 11:30 am, 12:30 pm, and 1:30 pm. Only 50 people will be allowed per workshop. To attend a workshop, individuals must sign-up at the event on a first-come, first-served basis.

Residents can visit www.BigBlueBucket.org for more information and to learn about other innovative environmental programs offered like free composting, safe disposal of old/expired medications, and "SFGreasecycle" waste cooking oil collection.

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Photos by Bill Wilson more at www.billwilsonphotos.com

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