

Mayors Challenge Their Residents in Water Conservation Movement

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IRVINE, Calif. (April 1, 2014) — With at least 36 states facing water shortages this year – including the most severe drought California has faced in decades – water conservation has evolved into a national imperative. That is just one reason the [Wyland Foundation](#) and [Toyota](#) launched the third annual [National Mayor’s Challenge for Water Conservation](#) today.

Mayors across the United States will once again lead the way and rally their residents to make the most pledges to reduce water and energy usage at www.mywaterpledge.com. Like-sized cities will compete to log the highest percentage of pledges. The program runs through April, and will award more than 300 eco-friendly prizes, including a Toyota Prius Plug-in, hybrid vehicle.

Notable cities that have already thrown their hat in the ring include Los Angeles, Portland, Tucson, San Diego, Denver, Orlando, Honolulu and Miami. The full list of cities is available on the website and new cities may jump on board any time in April. The campaign gives mayors and city leaders a positive, grass-roots way to reward people for their awareness efforts. Winning cities will also receive a set of high-tech software tools exclusively for water utilities to help reduce resident water consumption by at least 5 percent on an ongoing basis.

Even classrooms will be joining the pledge. To address the growing interest in water conservation in schools, organizers added a companion website for kids. The children’s website (www.mywaterpledge.com/students) includes teacher lesson plans, a video message from U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Gina McCarthy, and animated public service announcements to encourage teachers and students to take the challenge on behalf of their city. Teachers who make the pledge for their classes will also be entered into drawings for \$500 in classroom supplies.

“It is vital we recognize that children will be the future decision-makers of how we use our resources,” said Wyland, artist, conservationist, and president of the Wyland Foundation that created the national challenge. “Whether it is drought conditions in the West or high costs of energy related to water usage in the East, saving water has become one of the most talked-about issues facing the nation today.”

As national presenting sponsor, Toyota has been on board since the beginning. “Water conservation is a high priority for Toyota. In fact, our manufacturing plants have reduced water use per vehicle by 23 percent since 2000, and are setting new goals for further reduction,” said Michael Rouse, vice president, diversity, philanthropy and community affairs for Toyota Motor Sales, USA. “Not only does it make good business sense, but we want to be a part of the solution.”

Other program supporters include: the U.S. EPA’s Office of Water, National League of Cities, U.S. Forest Service, The Toro Company, WonderGroveKids.com, Bytelaunch.com and WaterSmart Software.

Last year, residents from more than 1,000 cities in all 50 states pledged to:

- Reduce their annual consumption of freshwater by nearly a billion gallons;
- Reduce waste sent to landfills by 18.3 million pounds;
- Prevent more than 69.9 million pounds of hazardous waste from entering our watersheds; and
- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 2.7 million pounds.

To take the pledge and learn more about the National Mayor’s Challenge, visit www.mywaterpledge.com and www.mywaterpledge.com/students. For tips on how to save water every day and learn about water-efficient products for the home, visit www.epa.gov/watersense.