

Water cutoffs to be weekly event

Officials say a record dip in supply at area reservoirs has led them to implement cuts starting this Friday and continuing indefinitely

City water cuts to get worse

Suspensions will be weekly, announces **Conagua**

BY NACHA CATTAN
The News

Water service cutoffs that have plagued Mexico City since January will soon become a weekly occurrence for an "indefinite" period of time as drought conditions worsen at reservoirs, the National Water Commission, or **Conagua**, said Tuesday.

Starting this weekend, water authorities will suspend 25 percent of service from the Cutzamala system of reservoirs and lakes, reducing tap flow by about 7 percent to the city, **Cona-**

gua said. The first scheduled suspension - which will be milder than recent monthly cuts of 50 percent - will begin Friday at 8 p.m. and end on Sunday at 8 p.m.

The announcement comes in the wake of a swine flu epidemic that has had health experts urging residents to adopt extensive hygiene measures. The shortage, however, has led **Conagua** to instruct residents to ration water, take quick showers and re-use water "as many times as possible."

Conagua said it had been forced

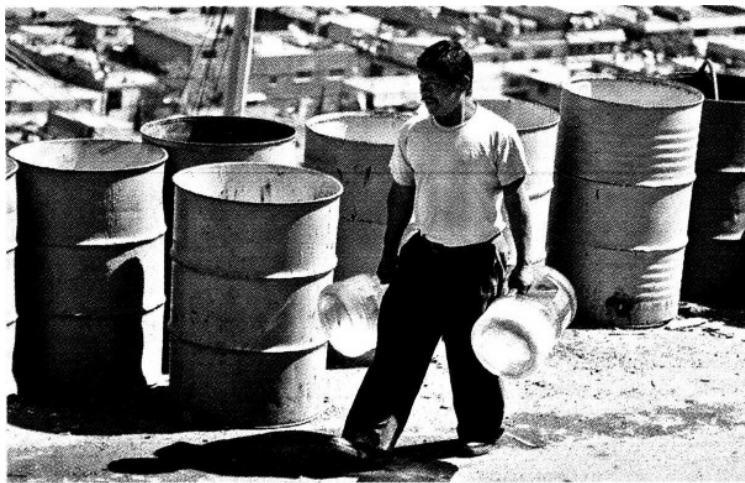
to reduce water channeled into the capital and State of Mexico because reservoirs west of Mexico City had dipped to 41.22 percent, a record low.

The decision was made "after a profound analysis of the precipitous decline in water registered last year," **Conagua** said in a statement. "The effect on the public is expected to be minimal, while we will save millions of cubic meters."

Past service suspensions of 50 percent of water from the Cutzamala system were supposed to last for three days each month. But in some parts of the city, they extended for up to a week at a time, as low water pressure and leaky pipes delayed a return to normal service.

Many Mexico City neighborhoods in eastern boroughs such as Iztapalapa have had perennial water shortages worsened by the cuts.

The Cutzamala system supplies water to 10 city boroughs and 13 State of Mexico municipalities.



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Mexico City boroughs like Gustavo A. Madero already suffer from water shortages.

