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NEWS RELEASE

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Pristine San Francisco Water Sources Protect Drinking Water from Trace Pharmaceutical Residues

Zero Treated Wastewater – the Major Source of Trace Pharmaceuticals – is Discharged into SFPUC Water Sources at Hetch Hetchy, Crystal Springs

San Francisco, CA: The San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC) today reaffirmed that the tap water it delivers to more than 2.4 million San Francisco Bay Area residents in San Francisco, San Mateo, Alameda and Santa Clara Counties is among the safest, highest quality and rigorously tested in the nation.

The major source of trace pharmaceutical compounds in drinking water is from the discharge of treated wastewater and stormwater runoff containing these compounds into source waters – lakes, rivers and other sources. San Francisco is fortunate to have tremendously high quality source waters in protected watersheds like Hetch Hetchy, Crystal Springs and Upper Alameda Creek/Calaveras Reservoir where there is *zero* discharge of treated wastewater. The SFPUC has a far lower level of concern about these compounds reaching our water supplies than many other U.S. or California cities with less protected or pristine source waters.

SFPUC water supplies are tested more than 100,000 times a year and meet or exceed all state and federal standards. The SFPUC shares concerns about trace amounts of pharmaceuticals in drinking water, which is why we participated in a first-of-its-kind study last year with other utilities to look at whether these compounds exist even at very, very low levels in our water supplies. The presence of one naturally occurring compound called *estradiol*, which is naturally produced in the bodies of mammals, was found at an almost undetectable level -- 48 parts per *quadrillion* -- in one sample. *This is the equivalent of finding less than a single grain of sand in an Olympic-sized swimming pool.* This could be naturally occurring, or an anomaly, and is considered to be of no health concern.

Delivering the highest quality drinking water is the SFPUC's top priority, and we strongly support greater research and monitoring of these trace compounds in the nation's drinking water and their impacts, if any, on public health over many years. The SFPUC will continue to advocate for and be a part of these research efforts.

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