FACT SHEET - Presence of Coliform Bacteria in Beverly Hills Water Samples

- Samples of Beverly Hills drinking water taken in December showed the presence of the common, generally non-harmful coliform bacteria that registered slightly above state of California standards. Regular testing since December has shown the City’s water supply to be safe and well within state standards.

- The California standard is that no more than 5% of water samples may contain coliform bacteria. In December 2012, 6.82% of samples showed the presence of the bacteria.

- Further testing was immediately conducted at the sampling points and upstream and downstream of where the coliform bacteria were detected. The additional testing came back negative for both coliform and any other type of bacteria.

- Anytime water samples containing coliform bacteria exceed standards, by state law all water customers must be notified.

- City staff was unaware of the noticing requirement until March 6, 2013. Water customers are now being notified through the media, on the City’s website and a mailer.

- Coliform bacteria are very common in the environment and are generally not harmful. However, people with severely compromised immune systems, infants, and some elderly people who may have been exposed are encouraged to talk to their health care providers about possible risks.

- Testing for coliform is conducted because its presence may indicate a problem with the water delivery system, which might introduce more harmful bacteria such as E. coli.

- The City is confident that the Beverly Hills water supply is very safe and the coliform most likely was introduced into the water samples because of stormy weather conditions during the testing. Procedures to ensure the integrity of the testing process and have since been introduced. In addition, future test results will be double-checked by staff.

##