

Report: Gray water risks need to be studied

By Matt Stevens, Los Angeles Times

As water utilities and their customers increasingly look to gray water and runoff from storms to supplement their supply amid drought, more guidelines and research are needed to ensure that the water is safe, researchers said in a report released Wednesday.

These sources “have substantial potential to contribute to local water supply needs,” according to the 326-page study, but “additional examination of risk is necessary” as use of stormwater and gray water becomes more widespread.

Gray water is untreated wastewater from washing machines, showers or bathroom sinks.

“This is water you have now that you can take advantage of,” said Richard Luthy, a Stanford professor and one of the report’s authors. But, he added, “there’s the opportunity there for exposure to pathogens. And that’s something that needs to be studied more carefully.”

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