

Hi Jessica,

Thanks for being open to input from citizens on this very important issue. I applaud the state for looking at many different water reduction options. However, I fear that many of the proposed regulations will be practically unenforceable. Who will enforce them? How will regulation violations be verified (for example, if someone waters their driveway instead of their plants)? We really don't have the infrastructure in place to monitor and enforce water restrictions.

However, we DO have a system in place to incentivize lowering water use, and that is how we CHARGE for water. In fact, it is the ONLY mechanism we have to change behavior. We need to modify the billing structure of water in the state so that those who use the most water pay MORE for their water per water unit than those who use less water. We already do this in how we pay for utilities (there are different tiers of usage that PG&E charges), so I don't see any reason why we can't do this for water too. Regardless of what regulations exist in California now, water is a finite/limited resource that needs to be conserved, and so our state's laws should be changed, if necessary, to allow for a tiered billing structure. Since the water agencies charge for a certain amount of water delivered to each home, that's what the tiered structure should be based on -- the same way gas/electric is billed. And the cost differential between the lowest tier and the two upper tiers should be LARGE -- large enough to change behavior.

A tiered billing structure is also a more EQUITABLE billing structure:

1. Those who are already conserving and are in the lowest tier are not penalized financially for continuing to conserve.
2. Those who are in the middle tier -- most likely the majority of users in any water district -- will be charged a BIG surcharge for anything above tier-1 usage, and they can either choose to pay that or look for ways to reduce. This will be the target group you'd see the most reductions in.
3. The largest offenders should pay a HUGE premium for being in tier 3 usage -- maybe 5-10X the average rate per CCF. If they have the money to pay for that, great. It only gives the water agencies more funds, which isn't necessarily a bad thing. Let the highest water users pay a premium to keep using that water, as that supports the conservation efforts for everyone else.

I am EXTREMELY concerned about water agencies taking the simple -- and lazy -- step of administering a flat percentage water reduction use across their entire water district. That is patently unfair. I happen to live in Cal Water's Bear Gulch water district -- the highest per capita usage in the state (228 gallons per capita per day). And yet, my husband and I live in a small two-bedroom, one-bathroom house. I take just

2 (short) showers a week. We have pitchers in the bathroom and kitchen that we fill with water while it's warming up and take outside to water our plants. Our (small) front lawn is dead. All our appliances are low-water usage (dishwasher, toilet, washing machine). Our average water usage is 38 gallons per capita per day (and that includes a small amount of outside drip irrigation). We have been living this way for many years (my husband grew up around here and lived through the drought in the 1970's). So I don't see how we can conserve much more than we already do. It is ESSENTIAL to have a tiered system of usage -- even in the Bear Gulch district -- so that reductions in water usage take into account already existing usage. If we are already in the lowest tier of usage, we should be APPLAUDED and allowed to continue to live our conservation-oriented lifestyle without penalty.

Thanks for your consideration.

- Lori