

Water/Utilities Report: Apr. 2015

California Climate Credit

You may have noticed that there was a credit on your SCE bill this month and a message from the California Public Utilities Commission. This credit comes from the California State program designed to reduce impacts causing climate change and improve air quality. There will be another similar credit on you October bill. The total credit for SCE customers for 2015 is \$72.48.

The money for this program comes from payments made by major investor-owned power companies that purchase permits for the carbon pollution they contribute to the air. In our community this is SCE. The program is one of the many programs instituted by the State to implement requirements to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to 1990 levels by 2020. The State goals are to reduce energy use in California by 20% as of this year (2015) and by 40% by 2020

The California Climate Credit is distributed equally to each electricity provider's residential customers in April/May and October/November of each year, regardless of energy consumption or bill amount. The credit is expected to continue each year until 2020.

For tips on how to make your home more energy efficient including rebates offered by governmental agencies go to <http://www.energyupgradeca.org/credit>. This site lists rebates for natural gas and electrical rebates and tax credits.

California drought information

As we are all aware, drought conditions are extreme in the State. California is now in its 4th year of drought and no one is sure when it will end. Snow levels as of this month are 4% of normal; in Southern California we have received 54% of normal rainfall for the water year so far, and California reservoir levels are 48% of capacity. Our local key well used to monitor the local water table is at a historic low (see figure 1 below). Combined with the low snow and rainfall this water year, the area has experienced higher than average temperatures. Looking forward, California is also expected to have population growth from current 37 million to 50 million by 2049 (http://resources.ca.gov/docs/Final_Water_Action_Plan.pdf).

On Saturday, Apr. 18, 2015, the State Water Resources Control Board issued additional draft regulations in a revised plan for cuts in water use. Should these new regulations be approved at the May meetings of the agency, Californians would be required to reduce their urban water use overall by 25% as compared to 2013 levels. How these restrictions will be implemented depends on the type of water usage in districts, communities and cities, current gallons per person per day used by water companies. Concern was raised on preliminary draft regulations that some companies had already reduced usage in their areas and that a further 25% reduction was either impossible or unfair when compared to other areas that had very high levels. (http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/waterrights/water_issues/programs/drought/docs/emergency_regulations/general_information.pdf)

Under the newly proposed regulations, communities with the highest per person usage, such as Beverly Hills and Arcadia in Southern California must reduce their average use by 36%. These areas have averages above 200 gallons per day per person due to large lot size and attendant landscaping. In contrast, San Gabriel Valley Water Company has an average usage of 44 gallons per day per person. Companies with this level of consumption will be required to reduce by 8%. The Suburban Water Company has an average usage of 113.8 gallons per day per person will be required to reduce use by 24%. (<http://cvarconnect.com/2015/04/09/water-conservation/>)

Approximately 50%-80% of residential water use is for outdoor irrigation. Thus there is the strong movement to move to water-wise gardens and particularly lawn removal. There are companies that will replace your lawns with plantings that reduce irrigation needs for free in 1-2 days if you turn over your rebates for lawn removal to them. These have been featured by local television channels and National Public Radio.

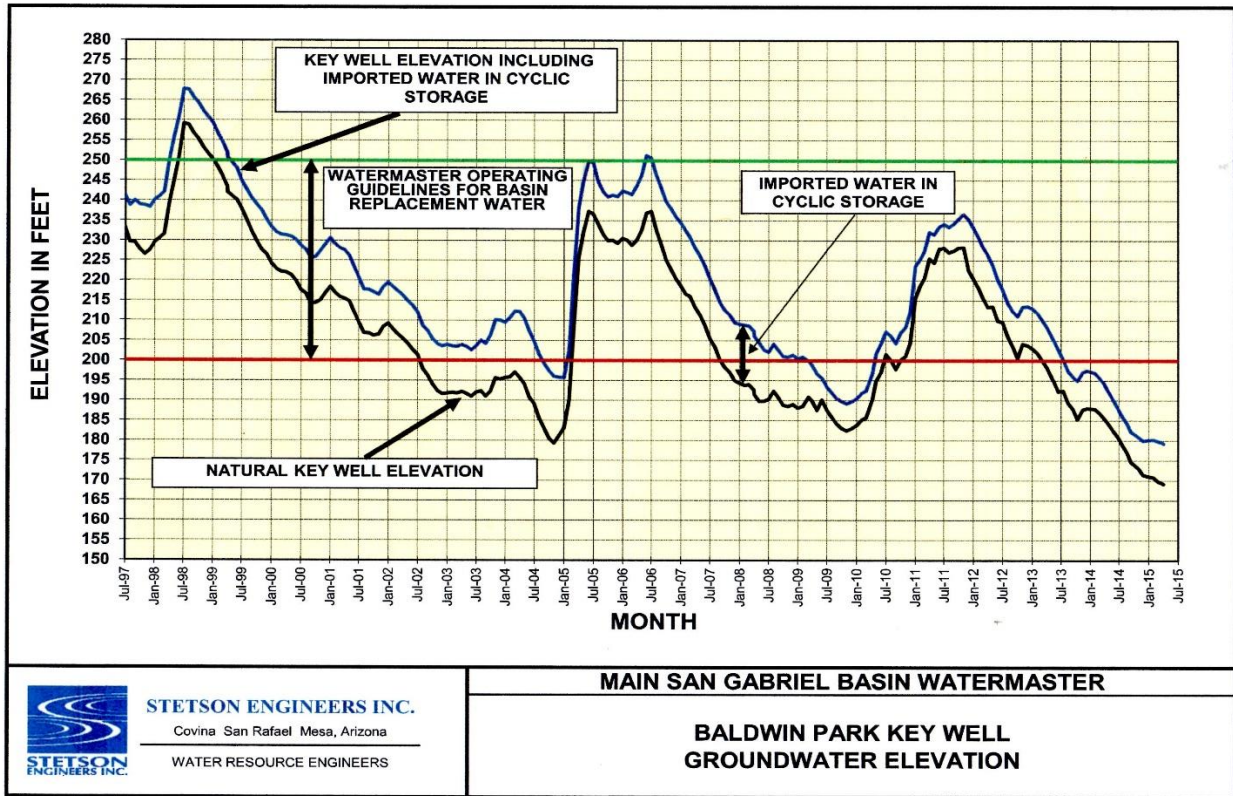


Fig. 1

For water-saving tips and rebates, check on bewaterwise.com on the web or <http://socialwatersmart.com>