

Water/Utilities Report for Mar. 16, 2015

Submitted by Joan Licari

Energy Programs

Rebate programs sponsored by SCE

Southern California Edison has a rebate program to reduce electrical energy use. Rebates are offered for changing refrigerators, pool pumps, cooling systems, washers and dryers. Be sure to check model numbers for eligible products.

Federal Tax Rebates

From: <http://energy.gov/savings/residential-renewable-energy-tax-credit>

Program Type

Personal Tax Credit

Rebate Amount--30%

“Established by The Energy Policy Act of 2005, the federal tax credit for residential energy property initially applied to solar-electric systems, solar water heating systems and fuel cells. The Energy Improvement and Extension Act of 2008 extended the tax credit to small wind-energy systems and geothermal heat pumps, effective January 1, 2008. Other key revisions included an eight-year extension of the credit to December 31, 2016; the ability to take the credit against the alternative minimum tax; and the removal of the \$2,000 credit limit for solar-electric systems beginning in 2009. The credit was further enhanced in February 2009 by The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, which removed the maximum credit amount for all eligible technologies (except fuel cells) placed in service after 2008.

A taxpayer may claim a credit of 30% of qualified expenditures for a system that serves a dwelling unit located in the United States that is owned and used as a residence by the taxpayer. Expenditures with respect to the equipment are treated as made when the installation is completed. If the installation is at a new home, the "placed in service" date is the date of occupancy by the homeowner. Expenditures include labor costs for on-site preparation, assembly or original system installation, and for piping or wiring to interconnect a system to the home. If the federal tax credit exceeds tax liability, the excess amount may be carried forward to the succeeding taxable year. The excess credit may be carried forward until 2016, but it is unclear whether the unused tax credit can be carried forward after then. The maximum allowable credit, equipment requirements and other details vary by technology, as outlined below.

Solar-electric property

- There is no maximum credit for systems placed in service after 2008.
- Systems must be placed in service on or after January 1, 2006, and on or before December 31, 2016.
- The home served by the system does not have to be the taxpayer's principal residence.

Solar water-heating property

- There is no maximum credit for systems placed in service after 2008.
- Systems must be placed in service on or after January 1, 2006, and on or before December 31, 2016.
- Equipment must be certified for performance by the Solar Rating Certification Corporation (SRCC) or a comparable entity endorsed by the government of the state in which the property is installed.
- At least half the energy used to heat the dwelling's water must be from solar in order for the solar water-heating property expenditures to be eligible.
- The tax credit does not apply to solar water-heating property for swimming pools or hot tubs.
- The home served by the system does not have to be the taxpayer's principal residence.

Fuel cell property

- The maximum credit is \$500 per half kilowatt (kW).
- Systems must be placed in service on or after January 1, 2006, and on or before December 31, 2016.
- The fuel cell must have a nameplate capacity of at least 0.5 kW of electricity using an electrochemical process and an electricity-only generation efficiency greater than 30%.
- In case of joint occupancy, the maximum qualifying costs that can be taken into account by all occupants for figuring the credit is \$1,667 per 0.5 kW. This does not apply to married individuals filing a joint return. The credit that may be claimed by each individual is proportional to the costs he or she paid.
- The home served by the system must be the taxpayer's principal residence.

California Solar Initiative-- Rebates for PG&E and for SCE customers have been exhausted and the program is closed.

Customers who purchase electricity from San Diego Gas & Electric, and you have roof or ground space that gets unobstructed sunlight from 11 a.m. to sunset year round, still may qualify for cash back incentives.

Water

California is continuing a 4-year drought. Since December we have experienced some rain in California—more to the north than in the south. However, recent measurements indicate the Sierran snowpack is about 20% of normal. And rainfall is currently way below average.

State water managers met recently and are considering more restrictions on water use and the extension of the governor's emergency restrictions currently in effect.

Water use in California as a whole has been reduced by about 7.5%. However, Southern CA. use declined only by 1.7% in a similar period.

Check for residential water-saving hints and rebates on bewaterwise.com.

Rebate programs are still in effect. Check bewaterwise.org for information on programs and rebates.

It behooves us to conserve. Farmers in the state are facing a serious groundwater shortage. As a result in reduction of surface flows, pumping has increased and water tables have dropped. In addition, groundwater supplies in some areas have become saltier.