



CUSTOMER ALERT

A NEW TAX MAY BE ADDED TO WATER BILLS

As the State of California struggles with how to maintain its highways, levees, public transportation systems and other infrastructure without raising income taxes, a proposal to place a tax on water meters is emerging.



Some policymakers in Sacramento are talking about selling billions of dollars in state bonds and paying for them by adding a new meter tax to water bills. The tax is proposed at \$3 a month per meter for residential customers, while businesses, schools, and industrial water users could be taxed significantly more according to the size of their water meters.

It is important that CCWD's ratepayers be aware of this development and the potential impacts on their water bills. CCWD carefully controls its expenditures to minimize rate increases. Since 1998, the District has held its yearly rate increases at or below 2.5 percent. During those eight years, the District's total rate increases have been about half the total rate of inflation in the Bay Area. For the average residential customer, a \$3 per month meter tax would increase water bills by about 6 percent.

It has not been determined how the State would spend new tax revenues because a financial plan has not yet been developed. If the legislature and governor come to agreement on these talks, a ballot measure could go before voters in the June election.

The District is providing these facts regarding the State's funding issues to inform its ratepayers. CCWD is closely monitoring these developments and will continue to work to protect its customers.

Throughout 2006, the Contra Costa Water District will be celebrating its 70th anniversary. The District was incorporated on May 9, 1936, just days after voters approved its formation.

The District will be marking its anniversary with a variety of activities in the Los Vaqueros Watershed. These will include a year-long photo contest, a new fishing club for kids, a 5K run in the fall and special self-guided hikes for families in the spring, summer and fall. Watch the District's website, www.ccwater.com, for more information including dates and times.

While much has changed over the past 70 years, the central and eastern portions of Contra Costa County have always grappled to secure a reliable supply of high-quality water for drinking, farming and industrial uses. That ongoing struggle is the reason the Contra Costa Water District was formed seven decades ago.

Cycles of extreme salinity have always been a problem in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta in the late summer and early fall months, when fresh water flows from the Sierra Nevada dry up and salt water from the San Francisco Bay moves into the Delta.

CCWD: 70 Years of Protecting Water Quality & Public Health

In the early 1920s, newly established industries and family farms in Central and East County began to suffer from increasing Delta salinity. Unwilling to sit by and see their livelihoods ruined, a group of citizens retained Richmond attorney



Construction of the 48 - mile Contra Costa Canal took 11 years from 1937 to 1948.

70th Anniversary Activities

Throughout 2006, CCWD will be offering a variety of fun activities to celebrate its 70th anniversary. These include:

- ▶ A photo contest year round.
- ▶ 5, 10 and 20K fun runs in the fall.
- ▶ Two Family Fishing Days in the spring.
- ▶ Watershed Detective Hikes in the spring and fall.

Details will become available throughout the year in your bills and at www.ccwater.com.

Thomas Carlson to lobby state and federal officials for construction of the Contra Costa Canal to bring water to Central County from the farthest reaches of East County, where salinity was significantly less of a problem.

After years of work – including a serious setback called The Great

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President
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Writer/Editor
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goltman@ccwater.com

Walter J. Bishop
General Manager



CONTRA COSTA WATER DISTRICT
1331 Concord Ave.
P.O. Box H2O
Concord, CA 94524
(925) 688-8000
<http://www.ccwater.com>

The Contra Costa Water District (CCWD) serves treated and untreated water to approximately 500,000 people in central and eastern Contra Costa County. CCWD provides treated water to Clayton, Clyde, Concord, Pacheco, Port Costa and parts of Martinez, Pleasant Hill and Walnut Creek.

In addition, CCWD sells wholesale treated water to the City of Antioch and the Golden State Water Company in Bay Point, and treats water at the Randall-Bold Water Treatment Plant in Oakley for distribution to the Diablo Water District and the City of Brentwood.

CCWD also sells untreated water to the cities of Antioch, Martinez and Pittsburg and the Golden State Water Company in Bay Point, as well as 22 industrial customers.

CCWD: 70 Years of Protecting Water Quality & Public Health

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Depression – Carlson's efforts bore fruit. In 1937, the Central Valley Project became a federal commitment of the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation and ground was broken on the Contra Costa Canal. Over the next 11 years, the 48-mile-long canal was constructed from Rock Slough near Knightsen to the city of Martinez, although World War II caused construction delays due to material shortages. With the canal partially completed, the first water was delivered to the city of Pittsburg in 1940. Eight years later, the entire canal was completed.

As work on the canal progressed, the citizens group planned the Contra Costa County Water District, a legal entity to contract, purchase, and distribute water provided by the Bureau of Reclamation. The District's formation was overwhelmingly approved by voters in 1936 as a Special District. The first couple of decades passed uneventfully, as the District purchased untreated canal water and distributed it to farms, industrial users and the cities and other utilities that treated it and provided it to drinking-water customers. By the late 1950s, however, residents and public officials were becoming concerned about water quality and cost.

In 1951, the privately held California Water Service Company became a wholesale water customer of the District. But a request by California Water Service for a steep rate increase just a few years later prompted citizens to rebel. Ultimately, the District purchased the water service company's Contra Costa holdings, including treatment, pumping, storage, and distribution facilities. In 1961, the District assumed responsibility for Central County treated water service.

Over the next 45 years, the District saw tremendous growth and change. Major additions to the system included the Contra Loma reservoir in Antioch, the Bollman and Randall-Bold water treatment plants in Concord



The first delivery of water from the Contra Costa Canal was made in 1940.

and Oakley respectively and new offices and maintenance facilities in Concord and Antioch. In the last decade, two of the District's largest projects were completed: the \$450 million Los Vaqueros Reservoir Project just south of Brentwood and the \$114 million 21-mile Multi-Purpose Pipeline that brings treated water from the Randall-Bold plant in Oakley to the treated-water distribution system in Central County.

The District is now studying the possible expansion of the Los Vaqueros Reservoir from 100,000 acre-feet up to 500,000 acre-feet. Work is also underway to add a new intake in the central Delta to provide improved water quality for the Los Vaqueros Reservoir and, ultimately, CCWD customers. The backbone of the conveyance system is the Contra Costa Canal and the District is working to replace the unlined portion of the canal to improve source water quality, flood control, and public safety.

Today, CCWD serves treated and untreated water to a population of 500,000 in Central and East Contra Costa County. The District is working hard to protect the quality of its source water in the Delta, improve its treatment processes, strengthen its distribution system and hold down its rates. The future holds many challenges for the District, but thanks to a proactive Board of Directors and a committed staff, those challenges are sure to be met.

Rebates Available for High Efficiency Clothes Washers

CCWD customers can receive \$50 or \$100 rebates for replacing their old, inefficient clothes washers with new High-Efficiency Clothes Washers. The amount of the rebate depends on the efficiency of the washer that is purchased. A High-Efficiency Clothes Washer can save more than \$700 on your water and energy bills over the life of the washer.



To qualify, you must reside in the Contra Costa Water District service area, which includes Antioch, Bay Point, Clayton, Clyde, Concord, Oakley, Pacheco, Pittsburg, Port Costa and parts of Brentwood, Martinez, Pleasant Hill and Walnut Creek.

Applications are available at retail appliance stores or online at www.conservationrebates.com or by calling 1-800-587-3442.

“Water, It's Worth It!”

What is the Value of Your Water Service? Take a Tour and Find Out!

When was the last time you thought about how your tap water arrives at your home? Did you know that it takes millions of dollars worth of equipment, pipelines, energy and labor to pump water from a source, treat it so that it's safe to drink, and reliably deliver it to homes and businesses every day.

If you'd like to learn more about your water service and its value to you, sign up for one of the two facilities bus tours the District will be offering in the spring. The all-day tours are scheduled for two Fridays: **April 21** and **May 5**. District customers who take the tours will spend a day traveling through central and eastern Contra Costa County learning about water quality issues and how CCWD diverts water from the Sacramento/San Joaquin Delta, stores it in the Los Vaqueros Reservoir and conveys it in the Contra Costa Canal to a treatment plant in the service area.

There is no cost for District customers but you must be over age 18 and sign-up individually. No group bookings, please. For more information and sign-ups visit our web site at www.ccwater.com, or call (925) 688-8041.