

City of Santa Rosa
Board of Public Utilities
Policy Statement on Water Conservation's Effect on Water and Sewer Rates
July, 2002

Purpose

To make a statement on the role of Water Conservation in water resource management and urban water supply planning; and to describe the predictable effect of implementing cost-effective water conservation measures on the water and sewer rates.

Overview

The City of Santa Rosa is empowered to provide water and sewer service within the City limits and within certain areas outside the City limits. With this role, the City has the authority to adopt water conservation measures, which affect customers of the City water and sewer utility, and the responsibility to ensure that the water resource is managed effectively in Santa Rosa.

Policy

1) In General: The City of Santa Rosa will continually seek to use water efficiently within the service area of the Santa Rosa water and sewer utilities. Water conservation measures will be evaluated for sustainability, equitability and cost-effectiveness.

2) Sustainability. Santa Rosa will seek to implement conservation measures, which result in permanent or long-term reductions in water use and wastewater flow.

3) Equitability: Santa Rosa will provide water use efficiency options to all user classes: residential, commercial, institutional and industrial.

4) Cost Effectiveness: All conservation measures under consideration will be evaluated for cost effectiveness in both the short term, and in the long term relative to other supply options. Santa Rosa will implement those measures, which represent the most cost-effective options to the community.

5) Effect on rates: The rates charged to our utility customers for water and sewer service may be affected by certain conservation measures due to the short-term reduction in revenue resulting from reduced water consumption and the ongoing fixed-costs of utility operations. These predictable reductions in revenue from conservation measures may be offset by an increase in the cost of water and/or sewer service, and will be included in the rate analysis performed annually. Because only cost-effective measures will be implemented, short-term increases in rates are actually less costly over time to the community than the larger rate increases that would be necessary if water conservation measures were not implemented.