

Water Use Efficiency Legislation

On May 31, 2018, Governor Brown signed two bills which build on the ongoing efforts to “make water conservation a California way of life.” Senate Bill 606 (Hertzberg) and Assembly Bill 1668 (Friedman) emphasize efficiency and stretching existing water supplies.

Q: What does the legislation state?

A: Each water agency will calculate its own water needs based on a total of all individual indoor and outdoor budgets for residential customers by 2022. The indoor standard is 55 gallons per person per day (same as Rancho Water’s current standard). The standard will decrease to 50 gallons per person per day by 2030 (Rancho Water has a plan for this and will keep our customers informed). The outdoor standard will be based on irrigated area, weather and other factors (same as Rancho Water’s current standard).

Q: Will I be fined \$1,000 per day for using over the 55-gallon limit?

A: No. Under the new legislation, **Californians will not be penalized on an individual basis for excessive water use.** The law sets water efficiency goals for water districts and municipalities but it does not regulate what individual Californians or businesses can and can’t do.

Q: Can I shower and use my washing machine on the same day?

A: Yes! The new California legislation does not make this combination illegal, nor does it create a financial penalty for residents whose water use exceeds a 55-gallon daily limit. It is also worth noting that washing machines are more efficient than they used to be, most high efficient washing machines use between 15 and 30 gallons of water per wash.

Q: What does this mean for me as a Rancho Water Customer?

A: Rancho Water already has budget based tiered rates for its customers that meet the standards in the legislation. **Californians will not be penalized on an individual basis for excessive water use.** We always encourage all our customers to know their water budget and stay within it.

Q: What does this mean for Rancho Water?

A: The bills stipulate that cities, water districts and large agricultural water districts must come up with budgetary targets for water use by 2022. They will then need to meet their targets across their ratepayer bases, with failure to do so resulting in a fine of \$1,000 per day or \$10,000 per day during drought emergencies. **The water agencies – not individual ratepayers – would be responsible for the fine.**