

News from the GM

MARIANA RANCHOS COUNTY WATER DISTRICT

DISTRICT NEWS

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- This month's Regular Board meeting is Thursday, September 20th at 4:00 p.m.
- **PLEASE UPDATE YOUR PHONE NUMBERS!!!** We need to be able to reach you!
- Please call the office with any questions or to receive financial assistance with your bill.

URGENT—ALERT – URGENT– ALERT— URGENT—ALERT – URGENT– ALERT— URGENT

Water tax proponents have proposed a new twist to the water tax issue. As part of a last-minute effort before the California Legislative Session ends on Aug. 31, a new and related proposal, SB 845 (Monning), would require more than 3,000 community water systems to add a voluntary remittance with an opt-out feature to the local water bills of California families and businesses. These voluntary remittances would all go to the State Water Resources Control Board to help fund a new Safe and Affordable Drinking Water Fund. While well-intended, this last-minute proposal is highly problematic.

Customers would have the option to pay the remittance, opt out or pay a different amount. A refund mechanism is also referenced. This proposal would be a logistical nightmare for water agencies, forcing thousands of community water systems to change their billing systems and hire new employees to bill and collect the remittances and send them to Sacramento. The net effect would be to make water less affordable. The Legislature could instead simply add a new voluntary contribution fund check off to the California Form 540 and have it efficiently collected at a much lower cost by one state agency (the Franchise Tax Board). **This alternative** would not increase the cost of water service in California.

In June of 2018, the legislature's budget conference committee rejected the statewide water tax, instead setting aside \$23.5 million in General Fund revenue to safe drinking water. Also in June, California voters approved Proposition 68 with \$250 million for safe drinking water that is prioritized for disadvantaged communities. In November, California voters will be able to approve Proposition 3 with another \$500 million allocated for safe drinking water for disadvantaged communities.

SB 845 is one of two last-minute bills that follow SB 623 (Monning) and the related June 2018 budget trailer bill. SB 845 is a majority-vote bill. The second bill, SB 844 (Monning), proposes a modified version of the agriculture taxes on fertilizers and confined animal operations and enforcement relief included in the earlier proposals. ACWA does not oppose this bill, which will require a two-thirds vote. The two bills are double-joined, so both bills have to be enacted in order for either bill to be enacted. Please contact the following legislators and voice your OPPOSITION NOW!

Sen Jean Fuller 916-651-4016 and Assy Jay Obernolte 916-319-2033

OFFICE CLOSURES FOR THIS MONTH

This month the office will be closed during the week of the 24th thru the 28th. This allows the District to complete billing during the hours the office is normally open. Please call the number listed below for all emergencies.

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EMERGENCY and after hours please call 760-912-9400



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The opinions expressed belong to the General Manager and may not reflect those of the Board.

“The mission of the Mariana Ranchos County Water District is to efficiently serve our customers with the highest quality water, 24/7.”

For the month of July

2013 Usage	2018 Usage
905,400 cubic feet	894,700 cubic feet
6,772,392 Gallons	6,692,356 Gallons
Good! 😊	1.18% Decrease

www.mrcwd.org

Agendas for meetings of the MRCWD Board of Directors are always available online at our website. You can view them 1 day in advance for a Special meeting and 3 days in advance for a Regular meeting.

W A T E R D I S T R I C T M A I N T E N A N C E

This is not really a maintenance item, but the entire front page was taken up explaining the foolishness going on in Sacramento. As we talked about in July, the District will be depleting part of our Capital Improvement Fund with all the updates and replacements we will have going on through the fall. Our next task is to find a good way to replace it. The current Board of Directors have not approved a rate increase since January of 2016. This is one of the many reasons for the “Rate Study” we are currently undertaking. It will give us an extremely accurate financial picture of how much we are charging vs what we should be charging for our water. One indicator that has already been identified is with our meter structure. We are charging the same base rate for 3/4” and 1” meters, even though a 1” can flow at a much higher rate. So anticipate an increase in that area of our billing. We are also looking closely at our tiered rate system. Are there too many tiers, or are there enough tiers? All of these questions will be addressed in the final study.

With the proposed drinking water taxes, and reductions on the amount of water you can pump and deliver to your customers on the horizon, California is not a very water friendly state. It is going to make our water business a very tricky endeavor. Here is my promise to you; I will devour the study, take all of our unique desert attributes into account, do all the research necessary to form a common sense approach, post the completed study on our web site for your comments and questions, take into account all your opinions and challenges, then I will prepare staff recommendations in order to present a viable rate option to the Directors for their consideration. This rate will be fair to you, and will help us to not only recover our Capital Improvement expenditures over the next five years. It will keep us competitive in these times of forced consolidations and takeovers of smaller water providers. Big Brother is watching. He is taking action as well! We must ensure that the longevity of MRCWD is assured in these troubled times. And with your continued support and patronage we’ll make that happen.

Please call or email me with any questions or concerns about the District. I’ll see you out there folks.