

Fresno to vote on water conservation incentives

Published on 11/03/2014 - 1:07 pm

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The Fresno City Council is scheduled to vote Thursday on an act that would award residents up to \$1,000 when they take action to conserve water.

If passed, the Water Conservation Act, introduced by Councilmembers Lee Brand and Paul Caprioglio, would establish a fund of \$250,000 per year for two years to be paid out as rebates for water conserving devices.

Property owners that install a recirculation hot water pump, for example, could get a proposed rebate of \$50 to \$100, while high efficiency toilets may come with a \$50 rebate.

Tenants of residential and commercial properties may also be eligible. Supporting documents such as proof of purchase would be required and city staff may perform onsite inspections to verify that the water saving product is installed and working correctly.

Funding would be limited to available resources and all rebates would be paid on a first come first serve basis.

"The City of Fresno is in its third year of a drought and recently escalated its actions to Stage 2 of the Water Shortage Contingency Plan," said Councilmember Brand, in a release. "The water restrictions of Stage 2 are impacting all City residents and businesses. The proposed policies in this Act will incentivize water conservation and offer solutions for drought and water management related issues in the city."

In addition to the incentives, the act would also prioritize water usage for city properties by letting certain grassy areas and shrubs go brown while focusing irrigation to preserve older, mature trees.

Another measure in the act would direct city staff to review and evaluate the requirements needed to implement a tiered water pricing structure that would charge more per gallon as customers reach higher levels of water consumption.

For water users needing assistance, the city will continue to offer free water saving evaluations while exporting purchasing large quantities of water conserving devices to be offered at discounted prices.

As part of the act, the city would also help low income customers by exploring an option allowing certain water customers to average out a one-year water utility bill using equal payment installments similar to what Pacific Gas & Electric Co. offers its customers.