

Dear Monarch,

Why should we be concerned with saving water? I think my community should just pay to water extra to keep our landscape looking lush.

WATER RATES

Dear Concerned Resident,

Water conservation is foremost in a sustainable landscape! Even so, utility bills are trending higher and higher. In many parts of our state, water bills have been growing faster than inflation. Generally, consumers can expect a 3% increase in cost per unit each year. Meter fees are subject to increases or decreases based on the cost of maintaining water district infrastructure. When our clients come to us looking for a full review of their water bill charges, we frequently see their cost skyrocket when they enter “penalty billing units”. There are a few reasons for this:

- Common variable fee water rate structure (increasing block rate structure). This example shows a common rate structure used throughout California; water district billing structures may vary:
 - Tier 1: Excellent
 - Tier 2: Efficient
 - Tier 3: Inefficient
 - Tier 4: Excessive
 - Tier 5: Wasteful
- As you can imagine, the cost per unit of water increases greatly as each tier is reached. The goal is to mitigate the *waste* of water, not withhold necessary water.
- By the time a consumer has surpassed Tier 3 usage they can expect to be paying at least twice the going rate for each unit of water used!
- By Tier 5, they have surpassed their allocated supply of water, and rates jump over 100% of Tier 1 costs, this is where high costs are incurred.

MONARCH TIP

Did you know that commonly used trees and shrubs in California landscapes use **50% less water** than turf grass, once they are established?