



Albuquerque Bernalillo County Water Authority

Albuquerque/Bernalillo
County
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ALBUQUERQUE BERNALILLO COUNTY WATER UTILITY AUTHORITY

BILL NO. R-15-11

RESOLUTION

Amending the Water Conservation Rebate Program.

WHEREAS, the Water Authority has adopted a water conservation goal of 135 gallons per capita per day by 2024; and

WHEREAS, the Water Authority service area achieved a gallons per capita per day use of 134 in 2014; and

WHEREAS, Water Authority sponsored water conservation rebate programs have saved over 200 billion gallons of water since 1995 and are a proven method for reducing water use throughout the Water Authority's service area; and

WHEREAS, the Water Authority approved in May 2006 a one percent rate increase to support water resources programs including additional funding for water conservation rebates and incentives; and

WHEREAS, the number of toilet rebate applications is declining as the majority of properties in the service area have already been retrofitted with low-flow or high-efficiency toilets; and

WHEREAS, the xeriscape rebate program has provided rebates for removal of over 200,000 square feet of turf; and

WHEREAS, when turf is removed sometimes the remaining trees do not receive adequate irrigation; and

WHEREAS, many of the older trees in our service area are not drought-tolerant varieties and replacing them with drought-tolerant species when they die will make the community more resilient to fluctuations in water supply; and

WHEREAS, urban trees help reduce heat, increase cooling through water evaporation, remove carbon and air pollution and cut energy use; and

WHEREAS, the Urban Ecosystem Analysis Report found that the Albuquerque lost 43 acres or 7 percent of its tree canopy between 1990 and 2008; and

WHEREAS, drought-tolerant trees are covered by the Water Authority's xeriscape program but that program is only available to customers who are removing turf; and

WHEREAS, there is a need to enhance the rebates available to the Water Authority's customers; and

WHEREAS, the Treebate program which provides rebates for tree care (irrigation equipment, trimming, disease treatment and fertilization) has proven to be very successful with Water Authority customers; and

WHEREAS, during the FY14 Customer Conversation meetings, support for Urban Trees was the second highest of the nine future water resource priorities; and

WHEREAS, a frequent request from customers is that the purchase of new trees be included in the Treebate programs.

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE WATER AUTHORITY:

Section 1. Beginning June 1, 2015, the water conservation rebate programs will be amended as follows:

A. The Treebate program will include the purchase of new trees listed in the Water Authority's xeriscape guidebook. The cap for the annual rebate for residential customers shall remain at \$100 and the cap for non-residential customers shall remain at \$500.

Section 2. R-06-12 requires that the Water Conservation Program submit a cost-effectiveness analysis detailing the amount for the rebate based on the estimate water savings and a fiscal analysis of the impact to the overall rebate program. The analysis is included as Appendix A.

APPENDIX A

The funding needed for these rebate program changes will come from the currently designated rebate program funds. The reduction in toilet rebate program participation will provide the savings to cover the cost of the increases in the Treebate program. The amount of the Treebate available to each individual customer will not increase, but overall participation in the program is expected to increase when new trees are covered under the rebate. As with all rebate programs, customers will be instructed to check that rebate funds are available before proceeding with any purchase.

R-06-12 requires that no rebate program will be developed that costs more than \$20 per unit of water (748 gallons) saved (\$1 spent must save at least 37 gallons of water).

The Treebate program is a long term investment in water usage reduction. Planting a new tree today increases short term water use, but in the long term having trees decreases water use by keeping the soil and air cooler thus reducing evaporative losses and by keeping buildings cooler and reducing the water needed for cooling. A rebate program now to encourage customers to purchase drought-tolerant trees will influence the quality of our community's tree canopy for decades to come.