

R R S C Water Crisis

# Emergency water conservation plan launched by supervisors

With Supervisor Phil Baldwin playing devil's advocate, Santa Cruz County supervisors Tuesday approved a \$557,000 six month emergency water conservation program.

The program, scheduled to begin in mid-April, will employ 85 federally financed CETA workers to distribute and install water saving devices in homes throughout the county.

The program's goal is to reduce water consumption in the county by six to 10 million gallons a day, representing a 15 to 25 per cent cutback, according to Lois Wyckoff, head of the county water conservation task force.

While expressing general support for the program, Baldwin questioned budget projections calling for spending of up to \$100,000 for water-saving plastic devices.

"I'm concerned about spending \$100,000 on plastic bottles when we may have them available at dumps, recycling centers and homes," he said.

Baldwin called \$100,000 "a great amount to bring more plastic into the community beyond what is here in supermarkets."

"Our preliminary decision is to purchase recycled plastic bottles if we have that option," Mrs. Wyckoff responded.

"There's a tendency to focus too much on the devices themselves," Ted Durkee, county administrative officer said. "The devices are part of a broader goal to educate people and change their habits."

Mrs. Wyckoff told the board that not all of the \$100,000 allocated for purchase of plastic bottles and water dams would be spent immediately.

"We expect to purchase between one-third and one-half of the devices we expect to use immediately," she said.

Baldwin also questioned the county's ability to locate as many as 16 rent-free distribution centers for the program.

"We're talking about public facilities," Durkee responded. "I think we'll get cooperation from enough public facilities

around the county to make it go."

"If you don't get the cooperation of public facilities, there's any number of private facilities that would love to have the traffic," Pajaro Supervisor Cecil Smith said.

A spokesman for the Santa Cruz Board of Realtors, Brad Macdonald, told supervisors that realtors are in the process of developing their own program to encourage water conservation in the county.

"Our board of directors have voted a sum for an education program in the news media," he said. Macdonald said county realtors are considering distributing their own water saving devices as well.

"We have over 200 distribution centers (throughout the county)," he said.

Supervisors also heard from an employment commission representative who said the program budget could be cut in half.

In another matter, the board voted to postpone for two weeks consideration of a proposal to add new courtrooms.

# Baldwin hits water LO rates

Supervisor Phil Baldwin has come to the defense of his Live Oak constituents in the face of increased water rates charged by the City of Santa Cruz.

Noting that Live Oak residents, who purchase water from the city, pay twice the rate charged city residents, Baldwin writes the city council that "the residents of Live Oak have been forced to conserve water" because of the higher rates.

He continues:

"While I doubt that conservation was the primary motive for the current rate structures, that has been its effect. Many citizens of Live Oak, most of whom must struggle to make ends meet, were forced to let gardens and yards go while their 'neighbors' in the city were not so affected. I feel the citizens of Live Oak have already paid dearly to keep the city water system financially solvent."

Baldwin complains that one water conservation plan being considered by the Santa Cruz city council would "provide special

privileges to the wealthy few at the expense of the rest." While not explaining this comment, Baldwin calls for the city to "establish emergency regulations that affect all users equally, regardless of their place of residence."

He suggests that water be

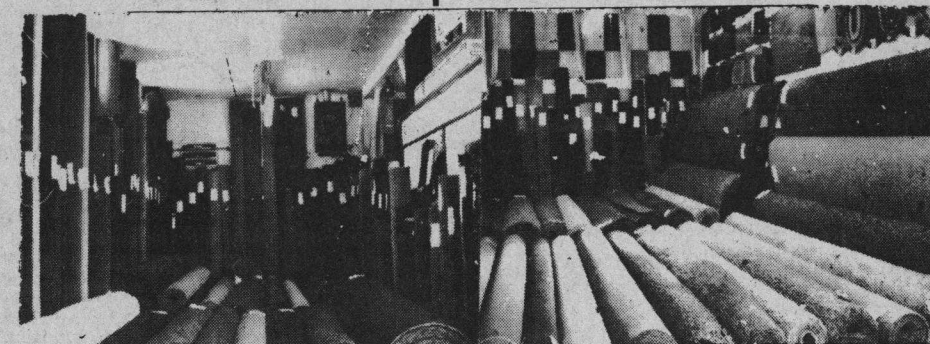
limited to 44-55 gallons per day per resident at existing rates, in the city as well as Live Oak. Any amount above that allotment, up to a maximum of 75 or 85 gallons per person, should be charged at double or triple the existing rates, he says.

"It is my view that 50 gallons

per person is sufficient for most individuals willing to be careful."



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