

\$300,000 In SC Water Penalties Being Canceled

water supply 1977

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The Santa Cruz City Council Tuesday canceled some \$300,000 in penalties assessed against city water customers for violations of the emergency rationing ordinance.

Persons who have already paid penalties may have a rebate coming to them and should apply for this at once by making out a claim form in Room 105 in Santa Cruz City Hall.

The council action Tuesday brought a round of applause

from customers who admittedly had gotten penalties for using more water than had been allocated to them.

The action was recommended by Morris Allen, Santa Cruz water director, who noted in a written report that the success of the rationing program and some very favorable rains had enabled the city to store an additional 500 acre feet of water in the Loch Lomond reservoir and had enabled the city to delay until at least July 1 tapping the reservoir for water to meet customer needs.

The council also adopted a variance procedure which in future will allow variances to be given either before or after a penalty has been assessed, and which will allow rebates of penalties to be made after future offenses.

Allen said in an oral report that of 7,500 customers billed so far, only around 700 have incurred penalties, that the penalty rate is running under 10 per cent.

The average residential penalty was put by Allen at \$100, the average business penalty

was put at \$450 and the average multiple residential penalty was put at \$300.

The penalties are based upon a \$25 charge for each 100 cubic feet of water used in excess of the allocation. A cubic foot is about 7½ gallons, 100 cubic feet is about 750 gallons. Hence a \$450 penalty in effect says the offender used 13,500 gallons more than he was allowed to take.

The penalty cancelation does not mean people who violated the ordinance will get off scot-free.

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