

WATER Supply 1990

Water rations reconsidered

Council seeks bigger shares for apartments

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SANTA CRUZ — The City Council agreed Tuesday to reconsider water-rationing allocations for apartments, mobile homes and other multi-family residential units.

Council members unanimously voted to ask the Water Department to prepare an emergency ordinance, to be introduced at the June 12 council meeting, which would increase those allocations by allowing residents to use either the current ration or 76 percent of their 1987 water use, whichever is greater.

Current restrictions, which took effect on May 1, limit master-metered condominiums, mobile homes and the like to smaller rations than allowed for single-family residents. Some 5,500 of the department's 22,000 customers live in those settings.

Water Director Bill Kocher said those rations were decided upon after a lengthy study of past water bills showed that water consumption was generally less in multi-family units.

Under the current schedule, a three-member, single-family household receives 21 units (15,708 gallons) of water per two-month billing period. But, a household living in a duplex receives just 15 units, or 11,228 gallons. Apartments or condos of more than 40 housing units received just seven units, or 5,236 gallons of water. There are 748 gallons of water in a unit.

The disparity in numbers has stirred up a hornet's nest of protest among duplex, mobile home park and apartment residents. Many were on hand at Tuesday's City Council meeting, saying that they face big fines because their allotments are too small.

"The flaws are outrageous," said Al Rowe, a resident of the Villa Santa Cruz Mobile Home Park.

Jean Adams, a resident of Yacht Harbor Manor, claimed that park faces fines of \$4,850 if residents use the same amount of water as last year.

Water Director Kocher told the council, however, that his staff had surveyed the 21 mobile home parks which use city water and that 18 should be able to meet their allocations with no additional conservation measures.

He said outside the meeting that the revision the council asked for would amount to about 20 million gallons of

water this summer. That represents an increase of three-tenths of 1 percent, he explained.

The extra allocations will come from water supplies which had been set aside for variances which the Water Department expected it would have to grant on a case-by-case basis. The new rules, he said, would consume about one-third of that water. On the other hand, he said, the rules may take care of one-third of the cases which would have required a variance.

The City Council also approved guidelines for filing appeals of rations. In all cases, customers must show they have taken steps to conserve water before they can apply for a variance. Among others, those steps must include weekly meter monitoring, installation of low-flow shower heads and toilet displacement devices, and repairs of all leaks.