

# Editorial from the Dallas Morning News

## Conservation plan should include higher rates

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Any time Dallas starts talking about conserving water, you have to cheer. We use 50 to 80 percent more water than folks in Houston, San Antonio and Austin. So we're thrilled to see a five-year conservation plan heading to the Dallas City Council.

If approved, Dallas would offer rebates and free equipment to customers who want to install water-saving fixtures such as low-flow toilets. The city also would launch a massive public education campaign. Students, for example, would learn the benefits of brushing their teeth with the water off.

City Hall would conserve more, too. For example, the plan calls for changes such as more efficient water sprinklers on public properties.

But let's not cheer too wildly. The council needs to take the proposal another step and substantially increase its tiered water rates over the next five years. If someone wants to use more water than the next-door neighbor, he ought to fork over the money.

Austin has such a system. An Austinite who uses 10,000 gallons of water in a month pays about \$24 for it. Back in Dallas, a resident would pay about \$16 for that same amount.

Houston pinches even harder. Its tiered rates run anywhere from six to 10 times higher than ours. Big water users in Houston pay \$33.60 per 1,000 gallons for every gallon over 12,000. Dallasites pay \$3.40 for every 1,000 gallons over 15,000.

Dallas understandably can't jack its water charges up to these levels overnight; the city just implemented a higher set of rates in October.

Still, the council should continue to include increased rates in Dallas' conservation equation. Other cities have saved water this way. We can, too.

## RESIDENTIAL RATES

<b>DALLAS</b>	
<b>Gallons</b>	<b>Cost per 1,000 gallons</b>
0-4,000	\$1.16
4,001-10,000	\$1.95
10,001-15,000	\$2.62
Above 15,000	\$3.40

  

<b>HOUSTON</b>	
<b>Gallons</b>	<b>Cost per 1,000 gallons</b>
0-4,000	\$6.95
4,001-5,000	\$13.60
5,001-6,000	\$16.10
6,001-12,000	\$18.60
Above 12,000	\$33.60