

January 2010

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## **General Rate Case Filed for Clearlake Customer Service Area**

Golden State Water Company (GSWC) filed a General Rate Case (GRC) application with the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) on January 4, 2010, to establish rates for the Clearlake Customer Service Area for the years 2011 and 2012. If approved, the new rates would cover the increasing cost to operate and maintain the local water system and fund more than \$1.8 million in local capital investments that are critical to providing reliable, high quality water to the area. This customer service area serves approximately 2,200 customers in the Clearlake area.

## **Estimated Impact on Clearlake Customers' Bills**

Normal CPUC ratemaking practices involve utilities recovering all of their cost increases in the first year of a ratemaking period, followed by much smaller increases that are primarily related to inflation. GSWC proposes an increase for residential customers with a 5/8-inch meter of approximately 22.6 percent for 2011, and an increase of 1 percent for 2012.

For a residential customer with a 5/8-inch meter who uses 6 Ccf per month (600 cubic feet or 4,488 gallons), their bill would increase by approximately \$14.90 a month in 2011, and an additional increase \$0.85 a month in 2012.

As an alternative, GSWC proposed a levelized increase over the two years (12.4 percent in 2011 and 10.5 percent in 2012). Even if GSWC's proposed rate increase is approved, customers would still be paying less than a penny per gallon.

January 2010

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## Reasons for the Rate Increase Proposal

The GRC for Clearlake forecasts how much the company will need to recover in rates for 2011 and 2012 to continue providing a reliable supply of high quality water.

Since the last GRC for Clearlake was filed in 2007, many costs have increased, while sales have decreased. Cost increases have occurred for items such as wholesale water, postage, liability insurance, depreciation, materials, purchased services, cost of capital, general office support, labor and payroll taxes.

The increase also is needed to fund additional water system improvements.

## List of Major Clearlake Capital Improvement Projects in the Filing

A water system needs ongoing investments to ensure water quality remains high, supplies are secure and customer service is never sacrificed. Since 1999, Golden State has invested more than \$3.7 million in its Clearlake system.

The major capital improvements in this filing include, but are not limited to:

- Replacing 2,600 feet of aging distribution pipelines of varying diameter to reduce leaks, improve flow and fire protection
- Installing new equipment and make enhancements to a local reservoir
- Installing new equipment at a treatment plant

2010 Proposed Capital Budget	\$645,520
2011 Proposed Capital Budget	\$611,200
2012 Proposed Capital Budget	<u>\$566,460</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,823,180</b>

January 2010

## How GSWC Rates are Established

The CPUC regulates utilities to ensure adequate levels of service are provided at the lowest reasonable costs. The CPUC requires GSWC to file a GRC every three years. The last GRC for the Clearlake Customer Service Area was filed in 2007 for the years 2008, 2009, and 2010. This time the GRC will only cover two years so that all of GSWC's three regions in Northern, Central and Southern California will be on the same filing schedule in 2013.

## Timeline for the Clearlake GRC

The review process for a GRC is approximately 14 months. The CPUC will take an in-depth look at GSWC's quality of service, revenues, expenses, and financial outlook. The CPUC may host a public participation hearing in Clearlake at which time customers will be encouraged to express their views. Commission hearings may occur where expert witnesses will testify and be cross-examined. An Administrative Law Judge presides over all Commission hearings and will prepare a proposed decision for comment. Finally, the Commission weighs all the evidence and issues a decision.

### **Clearlake GRC Timeline (Exact dates to be determined)**

<b><u>Activity</u></b>	<b><u>Date</u></b>
• Application	Jan. 4, 2010
• Newspaper notice	Approximately Jan. 14, 2010
• Customer notice	February - March
• Public Participation Hearings	Between January and April
• CPUC staff report	April 2010
• ALJ proposed decision	September 2010
• Commission meeting	October 2010
• Rates effective	Jan. 1, 2011 – Dec. 31, 2012

January 2010

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## GSWC Outreach Plans

GSWC is committed to keeping customers informed about changes in rates and providing tools and information to become more water efficient. As part of this GRC, GSWC will:

- Host an **Open House** Feb. 2, 2010, at 6:30 p.m. at the Clearlake Senior Community Center, to provide customers a presentation about the 2010 GRC filing (additional meetings will be scheduled, if needed);
- Notify each Clearlake customer by mail about the filing;
- Notify each Clearlake customer by mail about the date and location of any **CPUC public participation hearing**, if the Commission schedules one, at which time customers can comment to the Administrative Law Judge about the rate request;
- Update the company's Web site, [www.gswater.com](http://www.gswater.com), with information about the filing and tips and information about how to save water and save money.

## Protecting Low-Income Customers

Golden State Water Company recognizes the fact that rate increases of any kind can pose a challenge. For this reason, Golden State Water Company offers a discount rate (California Alternate Rates for Water, or CARW), which for qualified participants equals approximately 15 percent of the average monthly bill. Contact GSWC to see if you qualify for this program.

January 2010

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## **More About Golden State Water Company**

Golden State Water Company has been providing water for more than 80 years. Golden State is a subsidiary of American States Water Company, listed on the New York Stock Exchange (AWR), one of America's leading water providers. The local office is at 14595 Olympic Dr., Ste. A, Clearlake.

## **Employees Deliver “Best in the Class” Customer Service**

Golden State's industry-leading approach to customer service includes:

- One of the first around-the-clock Customer Service Centers in the industry, where the friendly voices of highly-trained representatives are available to answer questions or address any kind of water crisis situation day or night when customers call 1-800-999-4033;
- Our comprehensive customer Web site, [www.gswater.com](http://www.gswater.com), with a wide range of topics including water conservation tips and billing information; and:
- A strong customer service culture, industry knowledge, and community relationships resulting from more than 80 years in the California water industry.

## **We Work to Protect Every Drop from the Source to Your Tap**

Golden State Water Company is dedicated to providing safe, reliable water by:

- Working diligently to meet all federal and state water quality standards for nearly 100 different regulated substances;
- Investing more than \$3.7 million locally to upgrade our facilities since 1999;
- Managing a network of company-owned production wells that provide water to customers more efficiently than imported water from outside providers.