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# Water-rate hikes proposed for Visalia customers

*Staff reports*

California Water Service Co. has filed for rate increases in Visalia totaling 61.6 percent over three years, starting in 2011 at the earliest.

The California Public Utilities Commission will consider the proposal, which was announced Tuesday.

Cal Water supplies all of Visalia's drinking water from groundwater aquifers. Any rate increase will require an 18-month review process.

As proposed, the average residential customer's monthly water rate in Visalia would go up $4.96 in 2011, an additional $6.21 in 2012 and another $6.21 in 2013.

"We are extremely sensitive to the current state of the economy, and we work hard to operate as efficiently as possible," said Paul Mirwald, district manager for Cal Water in Visalia.

A range of conservation tools and assistance for low-income customers are available from the company, Mirwald said.

Cal Water officials report that improvements in the system, including the installation of 16,757 water meters to replace flat-rate services in the city by 2012, necessitate rate increases.

There is no guarantee that the PUC will grant the full increase Cal Water has requested. In fact, history dictates that the commission allows only a portion of most proposed increases.

Cal Water serves about 135,000 people through 39,200 service connections in Visalia. It has been the water-service provider for Visalia since 1927.

## Additional Facts

Information

For more on California Water Service Co.'s proposed Visalia rate increase, call 624-1620 or 310-257-1435, or visit www.calwater.com.