

From: Alice & Shelby - L.A. Times alice@latimes.com
Subject: Water and Power: Looking for drought solutions on other side of the world
Date: October 27, 2015 at 9:31 AM
To: jasdesign@earthlink.net

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Los Angeles Times

Water and Power

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Your guide to the California drought from the Los Angeles Times.

NEWS AND POLICY

Who is using all the water? It used to be that water agencies could reveal the identities of its most wasteful customers, but after a major drought in the 1990s the **California Public Records Act** was changed to protect **water guzzlers**. However, a loophole allowed the East Bay Municipal Water District to release a partial list of violators, which included Oakland A's executive Billy Beane. [Changes may also be on the way for the L.A. Department of Water and Power.](#)

Overseas solutions: California lawmakers are in **Australia** to see what that country's leaders can teach them about surviving a drought. Senate President Pro Tem **Kevin de León** is leading a 10-day trip to the [country that cut its water use in half following a decade-long drought](#). The trip is being paid for by the California Foundation on the Environment and the Economy, a San Francisco-based think tank.

No good deed: Angelenos have done such a good job of conserving water that the Department of Water and Power is going to **raise rates**. The utility

has seen a drop in revenue as its customers use less water. Therefore, the Board of Commissioners approved a [temporary pass-through charge, a move similar to what other agencies have done around the state](#). “We have no other way of recovering the revenue to maintain the system for our customers,” said Neil Guglielmo, director of budget, rates and financial planning for the DWP.

ON THE GROUND

Winter destruction: Californians have been praying for rain to end the drought, but the storms this winter could lead to tremendous **mudslides and landslides**. [The state’s slopes are primed for mudslides after years of drought and fires](#) that have stripped vegetation from the land. “But landslides associated with precipitation can be categorized in one of two ways: Those that come early in the rainy season, and those that come later.”

Shutting off the water: Walk around Los Angeles’ downtown Civic Center and you’ll see evidence of symbolic moves — dry **fountains**. The city shut off its fountains at City Hall and LAPD headquarters, while water continues to flow at the county’s Grand Park up the hill. [And the large pool around DWP headquarters remains full](#). “The divergent fates of the civic waterworks reflect the tension between the symbolic and the practical in the battle against drought.”

OFFBEAT

Upside of the drought: Could the state’s drought help the **monarch butterfly**? Homeowners who rip out their turf lawns in favor of drought-friendly vegetation are often planting milkweed, a plant favored by butterflies. [Just make sure it’s the native, and not tropical, variety](#).

BIG IDEAS

“We are making a passionate commitment to something we made up. On the **dairy-versus-almonds** thing, if you’re so passionate, just drink your coffee black.”

– Anya Fernald, the CEO of Belcampo, [on the politics of drinking almond milk during a drought.](#)

DROUGHT SNAPSHOT



The Frank Putnam Flint fountain is one of about a dozen fountains and pools around Los Angeles City Hall and Olvera Street that the city has drained to conserve water during the drought. (Mel Melcon / Los Angeles Times)

DAILY TIP

Swapping out some routine home appliances could save more than water — [it could save you a lot of money.](#) The Los Angeles Department of Water and Power estimates new sprinklers could save \$288 a year, while adding a pool cover could save an annual \$114

COVER COULD SAVE AN ANNUAL \$114.

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