

NEWS CLIPS

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Resource Conservation and Public Outreach

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San Diego seeks funds to cover water testing for lead at schools

City is the only one in California pursuing state reimbursement for assessment costs.

*By David Garrick
LA Times 5/13/2018*

San Diego is the only city in California seeking state reimbursement for testing lead levels in water at local schools, which has cost the city's water agency more than \$400,000.

The city has done tests at 256 schools since early 2017, but must test an additional 45 schools over the next six weeks. State legislation requires water agencies to test every public school, regardless of whether the agency gets a request, by July 1.

Significantly more schools in San Diego County have been tested than in any other county in California since the state requirement began.

The state has received testing results from 552 schools in San Diego County, compared with 360 in Alameda County, 280 in Santa Clara County, 263 in Sacramento County, 193 in Los Angeles County and 169 in Orange County.

Of the schools tested by San Diego, only four have exceeded the level of lead where California law requires them to take action.

In the San Diego Unified School District, three affected campuses — Co-Operative Charter School 2, Emerson-Bandini School and Birney Elementary School — have fixed their problems.

The fourth school was a French-English learning academy called La Petite Ecole in Clairemont.

The requirement, a response to a national outcry over lead in drinking water at schools in Michigan, prompted complaints from water agencies that it was an unfunded mandate.

San Diego filed a test claim with the Commission on State Mandates in January, something no other water agencies have done. Written arguments in the case are due by June, with a hearing tentatively scheduled for November.

"It's a very long, drawn-out, convoluted process with the state," Brent Eidson, deputy director of the city's Public Utilities Department, said by phone. "The state never intended to reimburse us."

If the commission rules against the city, San Diego's 275,000 water and sewer customers will be on the hook for the tests. If San Diego wins, every water agency in the state will be reimbursed for the tests it has conducted at local schools.

Eidson said it would be unusual for the commission to take a compromise position and order partial reimbursement.

“It’s usually an up or a down,” he said.

Lead in drinking water can damage the cognitive development of children.

When a campus is found to have elevated levels of lead, the school is required to fix the problem, with water agencies only required to conduct follow-up tests.

Water agencies are required to test five drinking fountains or other water fixtures at each campus, with school officials choosing the fixtures.

San Diego Unified announced last summer that it would begin testing all fixtures and cover the added costs itself. The district also decided to raise the standard of what’s considered a dangerous level of lead from 15 parts per billion to 5 parts per billion.

That makes the district’s standard the same as the U.S. Food and Drug Administration’s standard for lead in bottled drinking water.

Eidson said the lack of positive tests for lead shows that San Diego’s water does not contain dangerous levels of lead and isn’t corrosive. Lead in water typically comes from corrosive water extracting the lead from old pipes.

“The water itself, as it leaves our plant and comes to everybody’s individual homes, is definitely lead-free,” he said. “The question is whether the plumbing on your particular house, or in this case a school, has lead fixtures and is our water so corrosive that it is leaching lead.”

Eidson said one reason for the low frequency of local positive tests might be that much of San Diego’s water comes from the mineral-rich Colorado River.

He said those minerals, especially calcium, help create an internal lining that keeps the water separate from the pipes carrying it, which could prevent or reduce the leaching of lead.

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ECO-TIP

How to transform a fire hazard into mulch

*David Goldstein USA TODAY NETWORK
Special to Ventura County Star 5/13/2018*

Frank Smith planned to comply with Ventura County's June 1 brush clearance deadline by doing a week of yard work and bringing his discards to last weekend's free community cleanup event at Santa Rosa Technology Magnet School in Camarillo, an event put on by the Ventura County Public Works Agency's Integrated Waste Management Division.

Unfortunately, during the week, a rare and painful reaction to a routine medical procedure left him unable to lift a chainsaw or load a trailer.

Neighbors pitched in, cleared his property, and loaded his pickup and long trailer.

He managed to drive to the event, where a work-release crew supervised by the Ventura County Probation Agency unloaded the vehicle for him, as they did for more than 100 others who participated in the event.

Throughout the county, property owners are participating in the annual cycle of transforming a fire hazard into useful mulch, helping the Ventura County Fire Department prepare for a dry summer and high-risk wildfire season.

Also last weekend, the Central Ventura County Firesafe Council coordinated events in Ventura and Piru. The event at Ventura Community Park, put on in partnership with the city of Ventura, collected about 40 loads, and crews will chip the material this week for park use. In Piru, with funding from a U.S. Forest Service grant, members of the Ventura County Fire Department's Wildland Fire Division Crew brought their chipper and joined Firesafe Council staff to turn residents' brush into mulch, which they spread onto an adjacent county-owned lot.

One Piru resident brought in the remains of 10 dead trees, including stumps removed from his property.

At www.cvcfiresafe.org, you can learn about upcoming drop-off events, options for curbside chipping, rules for preparation of materials and a list of companies helping to sponsor the brush debris recycling programs.

For all of these programs, you must keep stumps, ivy, palm, yucca and succulents separate from other brush. These items are unsuitable for chipping.

Visit www.vcfhrp.org for information regarding fire hazard reduction, including the Fire Department's standard guidelines for "application of mulch and chips in defensible space." Property owners with questions about the Fire Hazard Reduction program can call 805389-9759 or send an email to fhrp@ventura.org.

For a fee, you can drop off yard clippings to turn into mulch, and you can buy mulch, at Agromin's site at Ormond Beach (805-485-9200); Peach Hill near Moorpark (805-529-6164); Simi Valley Landfill (805-485-9200); and Ojai Valley Organics Recycling Center (805640-9194).

Eco-Tip of the Week is written by David Goldstein, an environmental resource analyst for the Ventura County government. He can be reached at 6584312 or david.goldstein@ventura.org.



**Crews battle a brush fire in Ventura. Facing a brush clearance deadline of June 1, landowners are working with local agencies to turn their fire hazards into mulch.
VENTURA FIRE DEPARTMENT**

Community

People in the News



Honoree Glen Peterson

LVMWD Board President Given Lifetime Achievement Award

The Association of California Water Agencies (ACWA) has honored Las Virgenes Municipal Water District (LVMWD) Board President and Metropolitan Water District (MWD) Board member Glen Peterson with a Lifetime Achievement Award for over three decades of leadership in the California water industry.

After serving on the LVMWD Board for over 31 years and on the MWD Board for over 25, Peterson, 68, has decided to retire at the end of the

year. Throughout his illustrious career, Glen helped navigate both organizations through California's complex water issues and establish LVMWD as an innovative and premier water agency while continuing to develop the MWD into the largest and most influential water agency in the country.

Glen fell in love with the Las Virgenes-Conejo Valley and decided to grow roots there by purchasing a home in what is now Agoura. *(Continued on page 18)*

Lifetime Achievement Award

(Continued from page 3)

He has always had a strong sense of community and a calling for service, so became a board member of the Agoura Las Virgenes Chamber of Commerce and a chief petitioner for the Agoura cityhood initiative.

Glen, an avid environmental steward, moved on from the Chamber Board and became president of Las Virgenes Homeowners Federation, as well as managed the Peter Strauss Ranch for five years which later became the Mountains Conservancy Foundation. He was instrumental in achieving and assisting with the development of the Santa Monica National Recreation Area by lobbying for, and obtaining funding for the area.

Glen ran for the local LVMWD water board in 1987 where he won in a landslide. By 1993, Glen was chosen to be the MWD representative where he began his career in forever changing the manner in which water is distributed throughout Southern California.

One of Glen's first initiatives and successes at MWD was the introduction of fluoride into our water supply. He began by talking with the California State Department of Health and the Los Angeles Department of Health where he was able to create a coalition with the Center for Disease Control (CDC). Glen counts this as being the single most important and cost effective public health initiative that he had the opportunity to be a part of.

He was also instrumental in the building of Diamond Valley Lake, a major reservoir for southern California; the development of the Inland Feeder Project, where water is able to be moved from different storage locations to others or to treatment facilities to distribute to communities; served on the Quantification Settlement Agreement negotiating committee for MWD on the Colorado River, where he assisted in creating allocation amounts of Colorado River water to adjacent states and other water agencies, thereby ensuring that specific quantities would be annually guaranteed for our use, and he continues to be a leader for the California Water Fix. Glen counts the vote to fund the Cal Water Fix Project to be the biggest decision he has had to make since being on the MWD Board.

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