



“Drops of Energy” White Paper

In California, we’re always talking about conserving water, usually because of a drought, and increasingly because of our growing population and [likely future of water shortages due to climate change](#). But research shows another compelling reason: conserving water means conserving energy.

Pumping and treating water is energy-intensive — the [state water project](#), with its big pumps to get water over the Tehachapi Mountains to Southern California, is the state’s single biggest user of electricity. And the energy associated with water use — such as from dishwashers, hot water heaters, and laundry machines — adds up to a lot of pollution and waste. The California Energy Commission [estimates](#) that twenty percent of our electricity is associated with water use, mostly by urban customers.

UC Berkeley and UCLA Law Schools are issuing a [white paper](#) today [outlining policies](#) to reduce the most energy-intensive water use. Called Drops of Energy, the white paper also discusses the most prevalent barriers to conserving this water and ways to overcome them. It stems from a workshop discussion we convened with water agency managers, businesses, environmental groups, and state and local leaders. It is the seventh in our ongoing [Business and Climate Change Research Initiative](#).

Some key recommendations for water agencies and state leaders:

- implement rate structures that encourage and reward water use efficiency;
- gather and publicize water consumption data to help policy-makers and consumers understand where the inefficiencies lie;
- coordinate a statewide marketing campaign to encourage water conservation and water use efficiency as a way of life; and
- expand energy-efficiency funding programs to water consumers, such as a public goods surcharge on water bills to help consumers pay for water efficiency improvements.

So the next time you let your tap run or refuse to upgrade that inefficient water heater or dishwasher, know that you’re not only wasting water and money, you’re wasting energy.