



Water Conservation Program Updates

April 11, 2019

Presentation Summary

- University of Chicago (UChicago) Pilot Program Review
- Post-Pilot Impact
- DPU's Response
- Next Steps

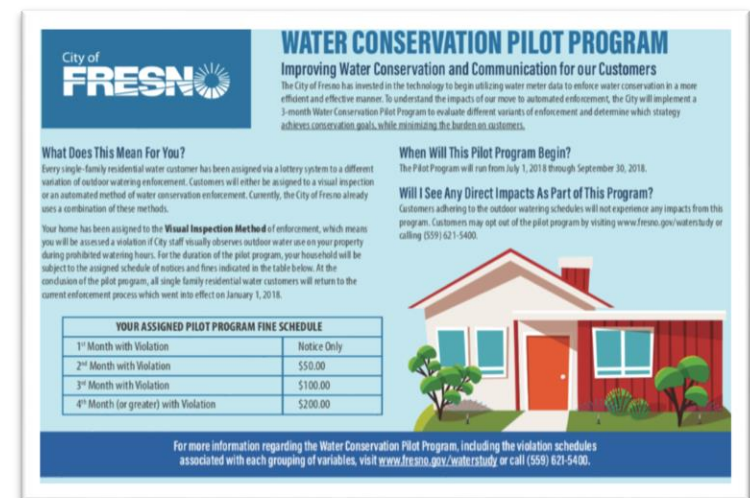
UChicago Pilot Program: Overview

GOAL:

Determine which enforcement strategy achieves mandatory conservation goals, while minimizing the customer fine burden

QUESTIONS TO BE ANSWERED:

1. Does automated enforcement increase conservation (vs. visual enforcement)?
2. Can lower fines still be effective at promoting conservation?

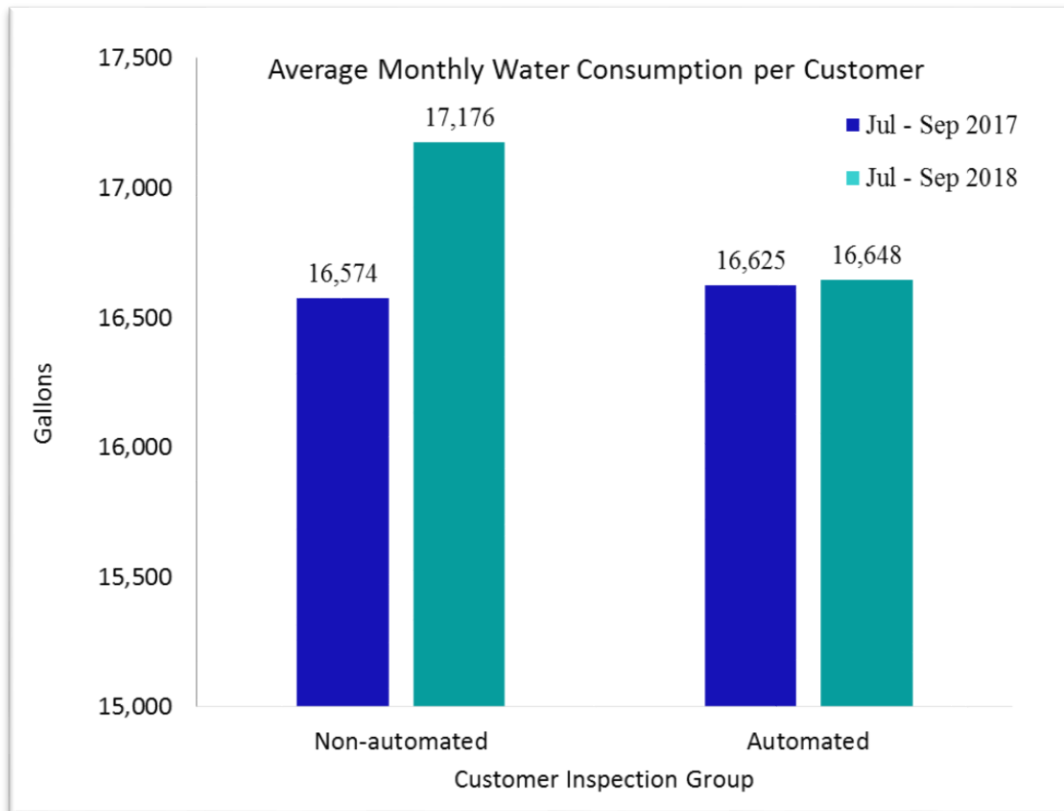


*Front Side of Postcard
Mailed to Customers, July 2018*

Pilot Program Takeaway #1:

Reduction in customers' overall daily water use

Automated enforcement significantly improved water conservation compared to visual enforcement



- From 2017 to 2018, average monthly water consumption per customer increased 3.6% for customers in the visual enforcement group, but only 0.1% in the automated enforcement group.
- From 2017 to 2018, water consumption in the visual enforcement group increased by an average of **579 gallons more** water per month than those in the automated enforcement group

Pilot Program Takeaway #2:

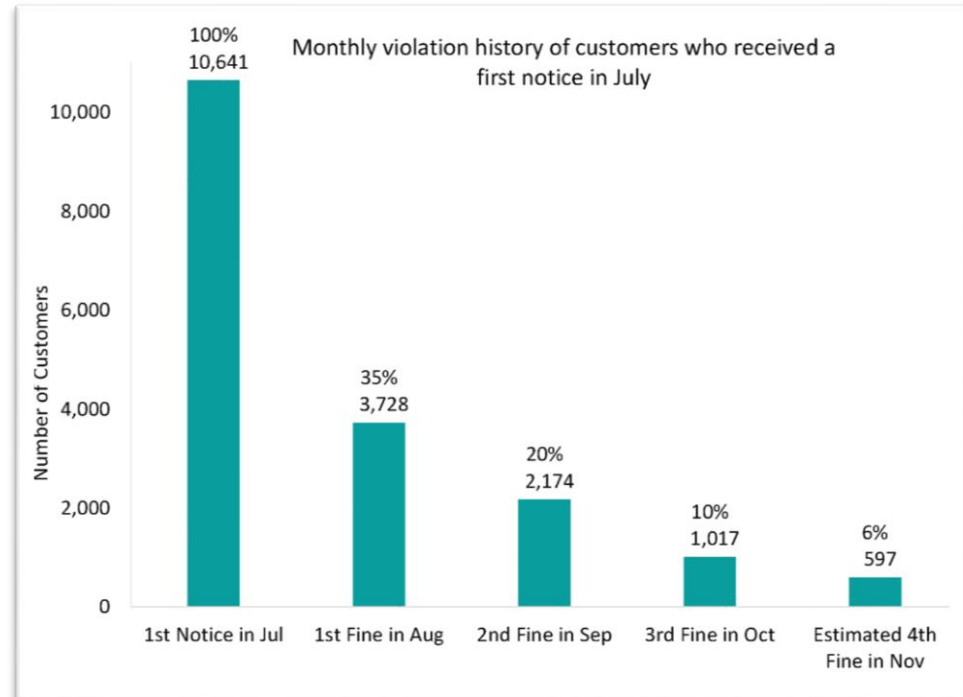
Compliance with Regulations: Automated vs. Visual Enforcement

During pilot period (July – September):

- 2,408 notices – automated enforcement group
- 20 notices – visual enforcement group

Customers changed behavior after receiving notices:

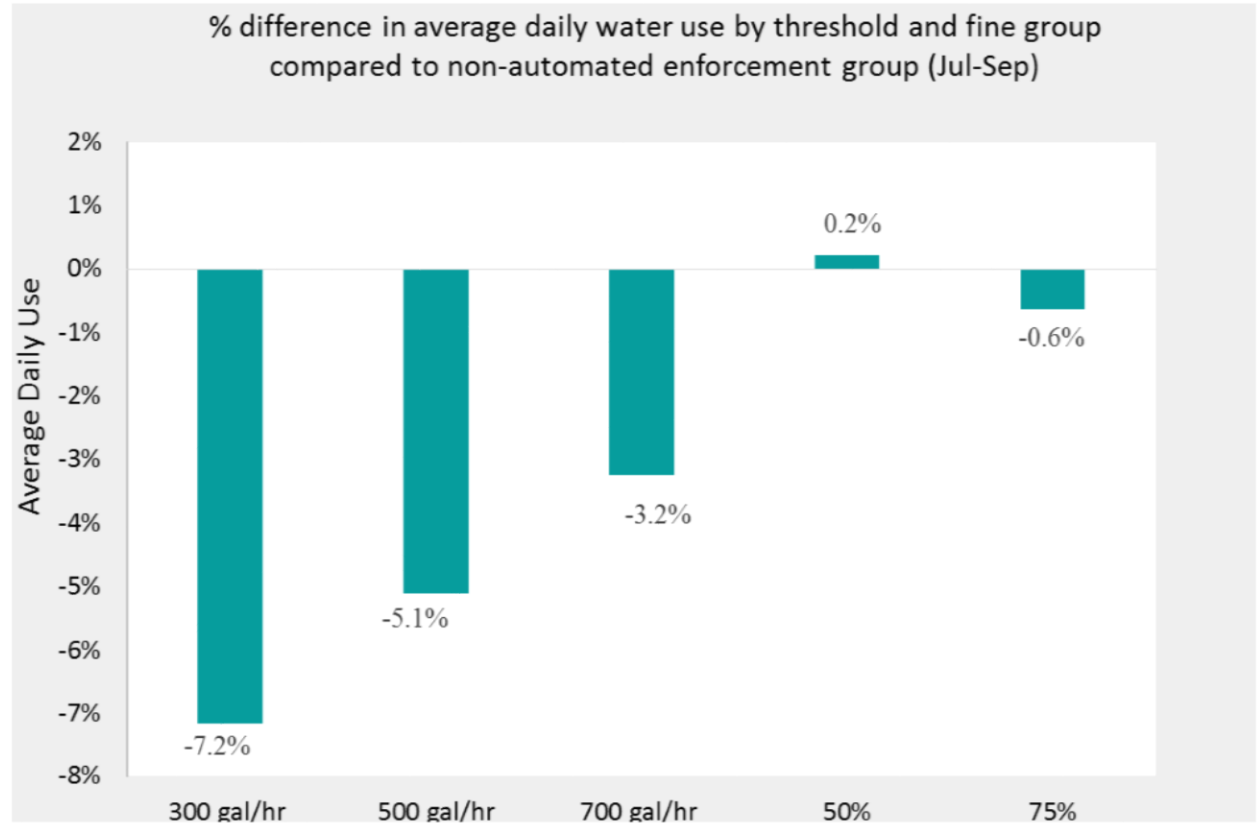
- Of customers who received a first notice in July, 65% had no violations the following month
- Only 10% of these customers received a third fine



Pilot Program Takeaway #3:

Compliance with Regulations: Reduced Fines

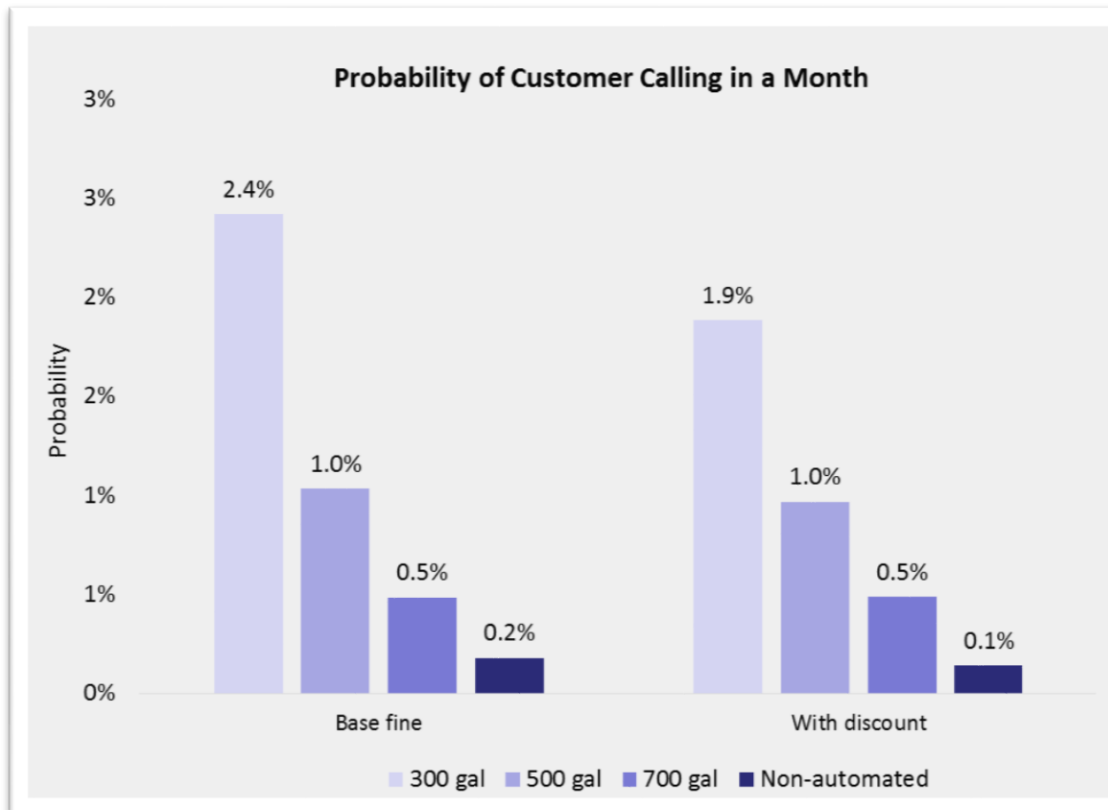
Fine discounts had little effect on water conservation, as compared to thresholds.



Pilot Program Takeaway #4:

Number of Phone Calls and Complaints Received

During pilot period, call volume averaged 3,488 calls per month.



- Customers in automated enforcement group (especially with stricter thresholds) were 7 times more likely to contact Water Conservation
- Customers with fine discounts were less likely to call, but this effect was smaller than usage threshold restrictions

Moratorium on Fines

Concerns about customer service staffing levels related to incoming customer calls.

- In October, when pilot ended and automated enforcement was used for all customers, call volume spiked to 7,500 calls
- During the pilot program, 55% of customers were under visual enforcement; these were subject to automated enforcement upon conclusion of the pilot.
- Field staff was brought into the office and staff was borrowed from other work groups to assist with incoming calls

November 1, 2018:

City Council approved Resolution No. 2018-253 implementing a moratorium on fines for violations of water regulations until further Council direction



UPDATE TO WATER CONSERVATION POLICY

On November 1, 2018, the Fresno City Council passed a moratorium on fines related to excessive water use. Any fines for excessive water use violations incurred after October 1, 2018, **will not be enforced** until further notice. Customers who have received a fine on their utility bill for an October violation will receive a credit on an upcoming bill.

Customers will continue to receive notification for excessive water use violations; however associated fines will not be imposed.

This policy will remain in place until further notice.

Contact the Utilities Billing & Collection Division at (559) 621-6888 with questions.

Program Review

Key staff evaluated the results of the pilot program and all aspects of the Water Conservation Program to determine what changes might be made and identified 3 Water Conservation goals:

- 1** Meet the Urban Water Management Plan 2020 conservation goal
- 2** Comply with all local and state laws and regulations
- 3** Deliver professional, courteous customer service and water conservation education to the public

A number of changes to water conservation regulations are recommended to meet all three of these goals

Summary of Proposed Updates

1 Simplified Outdoor Water Use Schedule

Stage 2 revised to mirror other stages with only two changes per year

2 Extended Morning Outdoor Water Use Hours

Outdoor water use permitted until 10:00 AM and after 6:00 PM on permitted days

3 Updated “Excessive Water Use” Definition

- Water usage threshold adjusts based on stages of the Water Shortage Contingency Plan
- One day per month of noncompliant use without consequence of enforcement, to accommodate any inadvertent errors, accidental use, leaks, or other anomalies
- Stage 2 Excessive Water Use set at 400 gallons per hour, which offers more flexibility to customers.

4 50% Water Waste Penalty Reduction

5 More Clearly-Defined Exemptions to the Regular Outdoor Water Use Schedule

- Long-term (annual) exemptions with alternate schedule
- Short-term exemptions

6 Streamlined and Updated Appeal Process

- Complies with new state regulations
- Customers may appeal to City’s Administrative Hearing Officer

Operations Plan

Operations Plan

Phased Approach

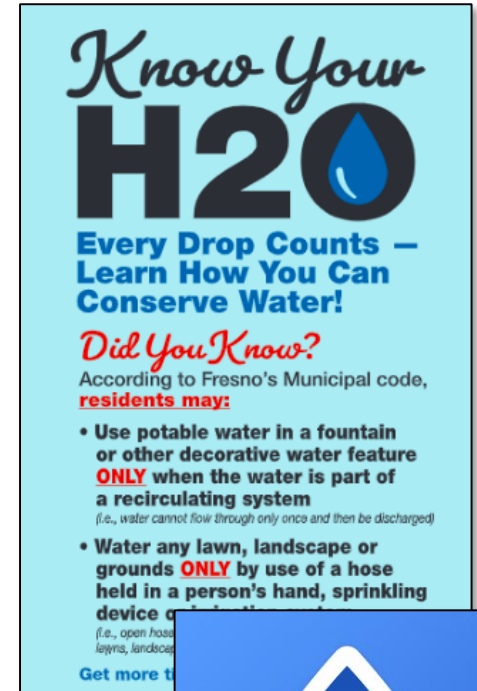
- **“FIX NOT FINE” approach**
 - Not to make money, but to change customer behavior to allow the City to comply with its mandates and goals
- Focus resources on the highest non-compliant water use first, then address others as possible
- Allows staff to meet Water Conservation Program's #3 goal:
Deliver professional, courteous customer service and water conservation education to the public
- Maintains staff availability to assist with customer education and provision of service



Education and Outreach Messaging

Primary Messaging Initiatives

- 1 General Water Conservation Messaging**
 - #KnowYourH2O: tips to help customers better understand water use and regulations
- 2 Changes to Water Conservation Regulations**
 - Outdoor Water Use Schedule, excessive water use limits, etc.
- 3 EyeOnWater App**
 - Increase customer awareness of tool
- 4 Water Use Permit Availability (Advance Notice)**
 - Solar panel cleaning, special event, other bona fide use



Moving Forward

Next Steps

- Begin education and outreach efforts
- Continue sending courtesy notices for **automated** enforcement through April 2020
 - Allows for customers to fully understand their water use
 - Allows City staff to ensure performance of automated system
- Visual enforcement will remain status quo, including assessment of fines as necessary
- May 1, 2020 – begin full automated enforcement, including assessment of fines as necessary
 - Using phased approach identified in Operations Plan

Action Items

Recommend City Council Approval of All Items:

- Ordinance amending Sections 6-501 and 6-520 of the Fresno Municipal Code relating to regulations for Urban Water Conservation and Excessive Water Use
- Resolution to amend the Water Shortage Contingency Plan
- Resolution to amend the Master Fee Resolution adopting the new schedule of fines associated with Urban Water Conservation and Excessive Water Use
- Addendum to a Negative Declaration prepared for Environmental Assessment No. EA-17-014

City of

FRESNO

