



ON TAP

TUD NEWSLETTER

Ditch Outage Scheduled for October - Please Conserve!

The Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) Tuolumne Main Canal that conveys 95% of Tuolumne Utilities District's drinking water supply will be shut down for PG&E's regular maintenance from **Sunday, October 3rd through Sunday, October 10th, 2021**. The District asks that you limit your water use during this timeframe while PG&E undertakes repairs and improvements.

Without water flowing in the ditches, the only water available is what remains in storage tanks and from limited capacity groundwater wells. Therefore, conservation is necessary to ensure adequate water supply for

drinking, sanitary usage, and fire protection during this period.

Please conserve water by limiting outside watering, avoid washing vehicles, turn off automatic lawn and drip sprinkler timers, and repair water leaks. The District requests that all customers continue to conserve one week after the outage to recover the water storage supply. For irrigation/agricultural ditch customers, periodic outages will continue from October through December for annual maintenance. For complete ditch outage information, visit www.tudwater.com



Preparing for this Year's Public Safety Power Shutoff (PSPS)

Since 2019, the District has struggled to deliver uninterrupted water and sewer services during widespread PG&E Public Safety Power Shutoff (PSPS) events. TUD is preparing for potential Public Safety Power Shutoff (PSPS) events that may occur this fall. In April 2021, the Tuolumne Utilities District (TUD or District) was awarded \$297,202 Community Power Resiliency grant from the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) to purchase additional fixed and portable generators to ensure water and sewer services continuity to most of our customers during power outages.

The district purchased generators for its Central Office, the Tuolumne City Water Treatment Plant, Mill Villa Sewer Lift Station, Willow Springs Sewer Lift Station, and Gold Springs Sewer Lift Station. The District's Central Office supports TUD's main facility, including the Emergency Command Center, Administration, Engineering and Operations staff, the monitoring and controls for district water and wastewater facilities. The ability to monitor and control the District's infrastructure is crucial due to the County's topography. The Tuolumne City Water Treatment Plant provides water service to the disadvantaged community of Tuolumne City and the Tuolumne Band of Me-Wuk Indians. In addition, the District purchased three generators for the sewer collection at the

lift stations serving the communities of Mill Villa, Willow Springs, and Gold Springs in Columbia. Purchasing these generators ensures reliable water and wastewater services during PSPS events and other future power outages.



Standby generators in preparation for this year's PSPS.

Investing in Certainty

In the era where the state's appetite for water now exceeds its ability to store rainfall, frequent and prolonged drought, water rationing, urban fire storms, and PG&E power stoppages, TUD finds itself in a unique and enviable position of being offered the chance to own the most senior water rights on the Stanislaus River. These pre-1914 water rights are as critical to our county's prosperity and growth as the water they are based on. This is because California water law recognizes a pecking order. Those with the oldest rights get the water first. Our chance to sit at the head of the table is a result of TUD's long-time working relationship with PG&E. This is literally a once-in-a-century chance to own rights to the water that flows through our county.

The truth is the Stanislaus River is over-subscribed. No one gets in unless you have a federally recognized and legal right. If we don't seize this opportunity and take advantage of this offer, a for-profit company could purchase these senior water rights from PG&E. Then we would be at the mercy of an outside buyer who could take over our contract with PG&E. We would be in the same position we've been in since 1914 of watching water we don't own flow out of the county. We would be gambling on our future, as we face enormous water uncertainty, unreliable rainfall,

impossible-to-fight fires, virus shut-downs, food insecurity and no second chances. By owning senior water rights, we have a fighting chance to protect our livelihoods, property values, and way of life. Do we want to gamble on our future and be at the mercy of an outsider who takes over the water rights? This is about investing in certainty, so that our children's children will not have to worry – because we invested in water security.

As many now know, PG&E wants to divest itself of these rights and has approached TUD about working with us to acquire their senior water rights along with certain hydropower assets. TUD and PG&E are currently in negotiations and are jointly committed to making this transfer a success. We are currently in the preliminary stages of a negotiation which will take several years to complete. Will it cost the community something? Yes. Like buying life insurance, we will be investing in our future not someone else's. By all accounts, it will cost our community more when we run out of options. What does the investment in certainty mean? It means we are ensuring our county's future growth, economy well-being, agricultural diversity, livelihoods and self-reliance.

The value of water is immeasurable. We may regret that our predecessors did not make this investment, but now



we can. With such high demand for the state's water, our self-sufficiency must include owning senior water rights to the Stanislaus River. We must guard against the attempts of those with political and financial clout to grab the water that originates here or a false sense of security that we have all the water we need and nothing to worry about.

TUD's water rights attorneys have looked at our current water contract extensively within the larger context and have concluded either we pay and we own the water, or we pay and someone else owns it. Now with the "first in time, first in right" laws, owning senior water rights will put us first in the legal pecking order to obtain Stanislaus River water, improving our drought immunity far more than we ever could imagine. What is this worth to our community?

For more information on the TUD and PG&E Acquisition, go to www.tuocourwater.com.

**Please Use Water Wisely.
Every Drop Counts.**

On Tap is published to keep Tuolumne Utilities District customers informed about issues and upcoming events.

If you have any story ideas or suggestions, please mail them to Lisa Westbrook,
at 18885 Nugget Blvd., Sonora, CA 95370 or email at lw Westbrook@tudwater.com.
For more information about TUD, go to www.tudwater.com