2013
Water Quality Report

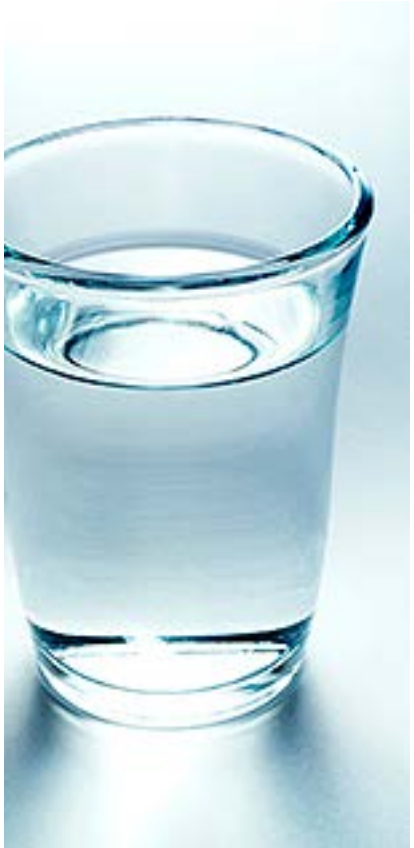
Los Altos-Suburban District

Este informe contiene información muy importante sobre su agua potable.
Tradúzcalo o hable con alguien que lo entienda bien.

CALIFORNIA WATER SERVICE CO.

2013
Water Quality Report

Los Altos-Suburban District



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Welcome

At California Water Service Company (Cal Water), protecting the health and safety of our customers is our top priority. In everything we do, we are mindful of our responsibility to our customers and our communities.

We are committed to enhancing the quality of life for those we serve by delivering a reliable supply of high-quality water at affordable rates. We are there when you need us, for uninterrupted service, fire protection, and assistance with water conservation.

Although you probably don't give it a second thought, it takes a lot of effort to get a reliable, clean supply of water to your tap. In addition to maintaining and upgrading the wells, pumps, and pipes needed to get the water from the source to your home, we treat and test the water in our state-of-the-art water quality laboratory, which can now test for compounds as low as three parts per trillion. That's like finding three grains of salt in an Olympic-size swimming pool.

This annual water quality report shows any constituents that were detected in your water in 2013, and how your water compares to state and federal water quality standards. **We are pleased to confirm that your water met or surpassed all primary water quality standards in this reporting period.** This report also provides additional information about the steps we take to protect your health and safety and answers questions you may have about your water quality.

Besides our focus on water quality and reliability, we conduct our business as environmentally responsibly as possible. As such, this year's report is being presented to you online to save paper; however, it is still easy for you to print out at home if you so choose. Or, if you prefer, you can call us to request a hard copy.

As always, if you have any questions or concerns, you can contact us by phone or email, through our web site, or in person at our Customer Center. For important announcements and other water-related news, please visit www.calwater.com or watch for information in your monthly bill. I also invite you to follow us on Facebook or Twitter, where we regularly post news and announcements and communicate with users.

Sincerely,
RON RICHARDSON
District Manager
Los Altos District

Your Water System

Cal Water has provided high-quality water utility services in the Los Altos area since 1931. To meet the needs of our customers in Los Altos and parts of Los Altos Hills, Cupertino, Mountain View, and Sunnyvale, we use a combination of local groundwater and purchased water. Our purchased water, which is treated surface water from the Santa Clara Valley Water District (SCVWD), comes from SCVWD reservoirs and the San Joaquin-Sacramento River Delta.

Our water system includes 297 miles of main, 65 booster pumps, and 46 storage tanks. We proactively maintain and upgrade our facilities to ensure a reliable, high-quality supply.

If you have any questions, suggestions, or concerns, please contact our local Customer Center, either by phone or through the contact link at www.calwater.com.

Using Water Wisely

At Cal Water, we are committed to ensuring we have a reliable supply of water for you and your family for generations to come.

In addition to our long-term water supply planning, we offer a range of rebates on high-efficiency devices, conservation programs, and tips to help you save water. How can you help? Take a moment to learn more and take advantage of offerings that are available in your area at www.calwater.com/conservation.

Inside the Water Quality Laboratory

Water professionals collect samples from throughout the water system for testing at our state-of-the-art water quality laboratory, which is certified through the stringent Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program. Scientists, chemists, and microbiologists test the water for more than 140 contaminants with equipment so sensitive it can detect levels as low as three parts per trillion.

Water quality results are entered into our Laboratory Information Management System (LIMS), sophisticated software that enables us to react quickly to changes in water quality and analyze water quality trends in order to plan effectively for future needs.

Cal Water's lab recently received a new addition called a gas chromatograph/mass spectrometer/mass spectrophotometer system. This device will allow our lab to test for more organic compounds and reduce outside laboratory fees by about $100,000 each year, savings that eventually get passed on to our customers.

Unregulated Contaminants

Cal Water regularly tests the water for certain constituents that are not currently regulated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) but are being considered for possible future regulation. In 2012, the EPA revised its Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule, named UCMR 3, to establish a new set of 30 unregulated contaminants to be tested. The monitoring enables the EPA to use scientific data in assessing occurrence and potential effects of these lesser-known constituents. If any of these constituents were detected in your system's water, they are listed in the water quality table of this report.

At Cal Water, we are committed to UCMR 3 monitoring, because protecting our customers' health and safety is our highest priority. For more information about UCMR 3 and the list of contaminants being monitored, visit water.epa.gov/lawsregs/rulesregs/sdwa/ucmr/ucmr3.

Water Hardness

Water's "hardness" is a measure of the amount of minerals (generally calcium and magnesium) it contains. Water is considered soft if its hardness is less than 75 parts per million (ppm), moderately hard at 75 to 150 ppm, hard at 150 to 300 ppm, and very hard at 300 ppm or higher.

Hard water is generally not a health concern, but it can have an impact on how well soap lathers and is significant for some industrial and manufacturing processes. Hard water may also lead to mineral buildup in pipes or water heaters.

Some people with hard water opt to buy a water softener for aesthetic reasons. However, some water softeners add salt to the water, which can cause problems at wastewater treatment plants. In addition, people on low-sodium diets should be aware that some water softeners increase the sodium content of the water.

About Lead

If present, elevated levels of lead can cause serious health problems, especially for pregnant women and young children. Lead in drinking water comes primarily from materials and components associated with service lines and home plumbing.

The water delivered by Cal Water to your meter meets all water quality standards for lead, but your home plumbing can affect water quality. When your water has been sitting for several hours, you can minimize the potential for lead exposure by flushing your tap for 30 seconds to two minutes before using water for drinking or cooking.

If you are concerned about lead in your water, you may wish to have your water tested by a private lab. Information on lead in drinking water, testing methods, and steps you can take to minimize exposure is available from the Safe Drinking Water Hotline or at www.epa.gov/safewater/lead.

DWSAPP

By the end of 2002, Cal Water had submitted to the California Department of Public Health a Drinking Water Source Assessment and Protection Program (DWSAPP) report for each water source in the water system. The DWSAPP report identifies possible sources of contamination to aid in prioritizing cleanup and pollution prevention efforts.

The water sources in your district are considered most vulnerable to the following activities, for which no associated contaminant has been detected: sewer collection systems, gas stations, dry cleaners, underground storage tanks (confirmed leaking tanks), chemical/petroleum pipelines, electrical/electronic manufacturing, research laboratories, agricultural drainage, and wells (agricultural).

SCVWD provides treated surface water to the Silicon Valley from three water treatment plants. SCVWD surface water is mainly imported from the South Bay Aqueduct, Lake Del Valle, and San Luis Reservoir, which all draw water from the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta watershed. SCVWD's local water sources include Anderson and Calero Reservoirs.

SCVWD's source waters are vulnerable to potential contamination from a variety of land-use practices, such as agricultural and urban runoff, recreational activities, livestock grazing, and residential and industrial development. The imported sources are also vulnerable to wastewater treatment plant discharges, seawater intrusion, and wildland fires in open space areas. In addition, local sources are vulnerable to potential contamination from commercial stables and historic mining practices. No contaminant associated with any of these activities has been detected in SCVWD's treated water. The water treatment plants provide multiple barriers for physical removal and disinfection of contaminants. For additional information, visit the SCVWD web site at www.valleywater.org.

We encourage customers to join us in our efforts to prevent water pollution and protect our most precious natural resource.

Possible Contaminants

All drinking water, including bottled water, may reasonably be expected to contain at least small amounts of some contaminants. The presence of contaminants does not necessarily indicate that water poses a health risk. More information about contaminants and potential health effects can be obtained by calling the EPA's Safe Drinking Water Hotline at (800) 426-4791.

The sources of drinking water (both tap and bottled) include rivers, lakes, streams, ponds, reservoirs, springs, and wells. As water travels over the surface of the land or through the ground, it dissolves naturally occurring minerals and, in some cases, radioactive material, and can pick up substances resulting from the presence of animals or human activity. Contaminants that may be present in source water include:

Microbial contaminants, such as viruses and bacteria, which may come from sewage treatment plants, septic systems, agricultural livestock operations, and wildlife.

Inorganic contaminants, such as salts and metals, which can be naturally occurring or result from urban stormwater runoff, industrial or domestic wastewater discharges, oil and gas production, mining, or farming.

Pesticides and herbicides, which may come from a variety of sources such as agriculture, urban stormwater runoff, and residential uses.

Organic chemical contaminants, including synthetic and volatile organic chemicals, which are byproducts of industrial processes and petroleum production, and can also come from gas stations, urban stormwater runoff, agricultural application, and septic systems.

Radioactive contaminants, which can be naturally occurring or the result of oil and gas production and mining activities.

In order to ensure that tap water is safe to drink, the EPA and the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) prescribe regulations that limit the amount of certain contaminants in water provided by public water systems. CDPH regulations also establish limits for contaminants in bottled water, which must provide the same protection for public health.

Some people may be more vulnerable to contaminants in drinking water than the general population. Immunocompromised people, such as those with cancer undergoing chemotherapy, those who have undergone organ transplants, and those with HIV/AIDS or other immune system disorders; some elderly people; and infants can be particularly at risk from infections. These people should seek advice from their health care providers about drinking water. EPA/Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines on appropriate means to lessen the risk of infection by Cryptosporidium and other microbial contaminants are available from the Safe Drinking Water Hotline at (800) 426-4791.

Key Definitions

Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL)

The highest level of a contaminant that is allowed in drinking water. Primary MCLs protect public health and are set as close to the PHGs (or MCLGs) as are economically and technologically feasible. Secondary MCLs relate to the odor, taste, and appearance of drinking water.

Exceeded Standard

Out of compliance with a primary MCL, a secondary MCL, or an action level, as determined by the California Department of Public Health (CDPH). For some compounds, compliance is determined by averaging the results for one source over a year.

Regulatory Action Level (AL)

The concentration of a contaminant which, if exceeded, triggers treatment or other required action by the water provider.

Maximum Contaminant Level Goal (MCLG)

The level of a contaminant in drinking water below which there is no known or expected risk to health. MCLGs are set by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

Maximum Residual Disinfectant Level (MRDL)

The highest level of a disinfectant allowed in drinking water. There is convincing evidence that addition of a disinfectant is necessary for control of microbial contaminants.

Maximum Residual Disinfectant Level Goal (MRDLG)

The level of a drinking water disinfectant below which there is no known or expected risk to health. MRDLGs do not reflect the benefits of the use of disinfectants to control microbial contaminants.

Notification Level (NL)

A health-based advisory level for an unregulated contaminant in drinking water. It is used by the CDPH to provide guidance to drinking water systems.

Primary Drinking Water Standard (PDWS)

MCLs and MRDLs for contaminants that affect health, along with their monitoring, reporting, and water treatment requirements.

Public Health Goal (PHG)

The level of a contaminant in drinking water below which there is no known or expected risk to health. PHGs are set by the California Environmental Protection Agency's Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment without regard to cost or available detection and treatment technologies.

Treatment Technique (TT)

A required process intended to reduce the level of a contaminant in drinking water.

2013 Water Quality Table

Cal Water tests your water for more than 140 regulated contaminants and dozens of unregulated contaminants. **This table lists only those contaminants that were detected in water sources used to supply water to customers.**

In the table, water quality test results are divided into three major sections: "Primary Drinking Water Standards," "Secondary Drinking Water Standards and Unregulated Compounds," and "Unregulated Compounds Detected at Negligible Amounts." Primary standards protect public health by limiting the levels of certain constituents in drinking water. Secondary standards are set for substances that don't impact health but could affect the water's taste, odor, or appearance. Some unregulated substances (hardness and sodium, for example) are included for your information. Compounds that were detected at amounts so low that they are considered insignificant are reported together.

Primary Drinking Water Standards

						SCVWD Data[1]		Los Altos System		
Radiological	**Year Tested**	**Unit**	**MCL (SMCL)**	**PHG (MCLG)**	**Exceeded Standard?**	**Range**	**Average**	**Range**	**Average**	**Source of Substance**
Gross alpha particle activity	2006–2013	pCi/L	15	(0)	**No**	ND	ND	ND–10	1	Erosion of natural deposits
Radium 228	2009–2013	pCi/L	5	0.019 (0)	**No**	ND	ND	ND–1	0.1	Erosion of natural deposits
Uranium	2006–2013	pCi/L	20	0.43	**No**	ND	ND	ND–12	0.9	Erosion of natural deposits
Inorganic Chemicals	**Year Tested**	**Unit**	**MCL (SMCL)**	**PHG (MCLG)**	**Exceeded Standard?**	**Range**	**Average**	**Range**	**Average**	**Source of Substance**
Barium	2011–2013	ppm	1	2	**No**	ND	ND	ND–0.2	0.08	Discharges of oil-drilling waste and from metal refineries; erosion of natural deposits
Chromium	2013	ppb	50	(100)	**No**	ND	ND	0.2–4	1	Discharge from steel and pulp mills and chrome plating; erosion of natural deposits

[1]Santa Clara Valley Water District supply data is reported from 2013 results. The range of years prior to 2013 reflect Cal Water data.

TABLE KEY

µS/cm	measure of specific conductance
n/a	not applicable
ND	not detected
NTU	nephelometric turbidity unit
pCi/L	picoCuries per liter (measure of radioactivity)
ppm	parts per million (milligrams per liter)
ppb	parts per billion (micrograms per liter)
ppt	parts per trillion (nanograms per liter)
SMCL	secondary maximum contaminant level

2013 Water Quality Table (Continued)

Inorganic Chemicals	Year Tested	Unit	MCL (SMCL)	PHG (MCLG)	Exceeded Standard?	Range	Average	Range	Average	Source of Substance
Fluoride	2011–2013	ppm	2	1	**No**	ND	ND	ND–0.2	0.1	Erosion of natural deposits; water additive that promotes strong teeth; discharge from fertilizer and aluminum factories
Nitrate (as nitrate)[2]	2011–2013	ppm	45	45	**No**	ND–2	ND	7–39	27	Runoff and leaching from fertilizer use; leaching from septic tanks and sewage; erosion of natural deposits

	Year Tested	Unit	MCL (SMCL)	PHG (MCLG)	Exceeded Standard?	Highest Level	Lowest Monthly Percent	Highest Level	Lowest Monthly Percent	Source of Substance
Turbidity (surface water requiring filtration)	2013	NTU	TT	n/a	**No**	0.11	100	n/a	n/a	Soil runoff

Organic Chemicals	Year Tested	Unit	MCL (SMCL)	PHG (MCLG)	Exceeded Standard?	Value	Range	Average	Source of Substance
2,4-D	2013	ppb	70	20	**No**	0.05	n/a	n/a	Runoff from herbicide use on row crops, range land, lawns, and aquatic weeds

Disinfection Byproducts	Year Tested	Unit	MCL (SMCL)	PHG (MCLG)	Exceeded Standard?	Range	Highest Annual Average	Range	Highest Annual Average	Source of Substance
Total haloacetic acids	2013	ppb	60	n/a	**No**	ND–45	17	ND–45	17	Byproduct of drinking water chlorination
Total trihalomethanes	2013	ppb	80	n/a	**No**	ND–70	42	ND–70	42	Byproduct of drinking water chlorination

[2]The average nitrate level was 27 ppm, with a maximum level of 39 ppm. We are closely monitoring the nitrate levels. Nitrate in drinking water at levels above 45 ppm is a health risk for infants of less than six months of age. Such nitrate levels in drinking water can interfere with the capacity of the infant's blood to carry oxygen, resulting in a serious illness; symptoms include shortness of breath and blueness of the skin. Nitrate levels above 45 ppm may also affect the ability of the blood to carry oxygen in other individuals, such as pregnant women and those with certain specific enzyme deficiencies. If you are caring for an infant or you are pregnant, you should seek advice from your health care provider.

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2013 Water Quality Table (Continued)

Disinfectant and DBP Precursor	Year Tested	Unit	MRDL	MRDLG	Exceeded Standard?	Range	Average	Range	Average	Source of Substance
Chloramine	2013	ppm	4	4	No	ND–2	1	ND–2	1	Drinking water disinfectant added for treatment
Total organic carbon	2013	ppm	TT	n/a	No	1–3	2	n/a	n/a	Various natural and manmade sources

Other Regulated Substances

Metals	Year Tested	Unit	AL	PHG (MCLG)	Exceeded Standard?	90th Percentile	Samples > AL	90th Percentile	Samples > AL	Source of Substance
Copper	2013	ppm	1.3	0.3	No	0.3	1 of 33	0.3	1 of 33	Internal corrosion of household plumbing systems; erosion of natural deposits; leaching from wood preservatives
Lead	2013	ppb	15	2	No	ND	1 of 33	ND	1 of 33	Internal corrosion of household plumbing systems; discharge from industrial manufacturers; erosion of natural deposits

Secondary Drinking Water Standards and Unregulated Compounds

Inorganic Chemicals	Year Tested	Unit	SMCL	PHG (MCLG)	Exceeded Standard?	Range	Average	Range	Average or Value	Source of Substance
Aluminum[3]	2011–2013	ppm	0.2	0.6	Yes	ND	ND	ND–0.3	0.02	Erosion of natural deposits; residue from some surface water treatment processes
Ammonia (free)	2013	ppm	n/a	n/a	No	0.09–0.1	0.1	ND	ND	Disinfection
Ammonia (total)	2013	ppm	n/a	n/a	No	0.4–0.5	0.5	ND	ND	Disinfection
Alkalinity (as CaCO3)	2013	ppm	n/a	n/a	No	68–81	75	ND	ND	Erosion of natural deposits
Alkalinity (as HCO3)	2013	ppm	n/a	n/a	No	83–99	92	ND	ND	Erosion of natural deposits

[3]The average aluminum level was 0.02 mg/L, with a maximum level of 0.3 mg/L. Although this exceeds the SMCL of 0.2 mg/L, secondary standards are established to address aesthetic issues, and there are no health risks associated with these concentrations of aluminum.

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SMCL	secondary maximum contaminant level

2013 Water Quality Table (Continued)

Inorganic Chemicals	Year Tested	Unit	SMCL	PHG (MCLG)	Exceeded Standard?	Range	Average	Range	Average or Value	Source of Substance
Boron	2013	ppb	NL=1	n/a	No	137–222	165	ND	ND	Erosion of natural deposits
Bromide	2013	ppm	n/a	n/a	No	ND–0.08	ND	ND	ND	Erosion of natural deposits
Calcium	2011–2013	ppm	n/a	n/a	No	18–27	21	59–120	85	Erosion of natural deposits
Calcium (as CaCO3)	2013	ppm	n/a	n/a	No	45–67	52	ND	ND	Erosion of natural deposits
Chloride	2011–2013	ppm	500	n/a	No	7.6–7.8	7.7	35–80	56	Erosion of natural deposits; seawater influence
Chromium 6+	2011–2013	ppb	n/a	0.02	No	ND	ND	ND–2.6	1	Discharge from steel and pulp mills and chrome plating; erosion of natural deposits
Cobalt	2013	ppm	n/a	n/a	No	ND	ND	n/a	1	Erosion of natural deposits
Hardness	2011–2013	ppm	n/a	n/a	No	91–125	104	260–440	329	Erosion of natural deposits
Iron[4]	2011–2013	ppb	300	n/a	Yes	ND	ND	ND–460	27	Leaching from natural deposits; industrial wastes
Magnesium	2011–2013	ppm	n/a	n/a	No	13–15	13	22–42	28	Erosion of natural deposits
Manganese	2011–2013	ppb	50	n/a	No	ND	ND	ND–32	2	Leaching from natural deposits
Molybdenum	2011–2013	ppb	n/a	n/a	No	ND–2	ND	ND–5	1	Erosion of natural deposits
pH	2011–2013	Units	n/a	n/a	No	6–8	7	6–8	7	Inherent characteristic of water
Phosphate	2013	ppm	n/a	n/a	No	0.9–1	1	ND	ND	Erosion of natural deposits
Potassium	2013	ppm	n/a	n/a	No	3–3.2	3.1	ND	ND	Erosion of natural deposits
Silica	2013	ppm	n/a	n/a	No	9–13	11	ND	ND	Erosion of natural deposits
Sodium	2013	ppm	n/a	n/a	No	62–70	67	23–44	32	Erosion of natural deposits; seawater influence

[4]Iron is present at levels that exceed the SMCL of 300 ppb. The iron SMCL was set to protect you against unpleasant aesthetic effects, such as color, taste, odor, and the staining of plumbing fixtures and clothing when washed. Exceeding this SMCL does not pose a health risk.

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SMCL	secondary maximum contaminant level

2013 Water Quality Table (Continued)

Inorganic Chemicals	Year Tested	Unit	SMCL	PHG (MCLG)	Exceeded Standard?	Range	Average	Range	Average or Value	Source of Substance
Specific conductance	2011–2013	µS/cm	1600	n/a	No	522–593	558	630–960	744	Erosion of natural deposits; seawater influence
Strontium	2013	ppb	n/a	n/a	No	ND	ND	230–1100	422	Erosion of natural deposits
Sulfate	2011–2013	ppm	500	n/a	No	48–84	61	20–47	35	Runoff/leaching from natural deposits; industrial wastes
Total dissolved solids	2011–2013	ppm	1000	n/a	No	274–358	307	350–570	437	Runoff/leaching from natural deposits
Turbidity (groundwater)	2011–2013	NTU	5	n/a	No	0.06	0.06	ND–3	0.4	Soil runoff
Vanadium	2011–2013	ppb	NL=50	n/a	No	ND	ND	2–19	6	Erosion of natural deposits; manufacturing of alloys and steel

Disinfection Byproducts	Year Tested	Unit	MCL (SMCL)	PHG (MCLG)	Exceeded Standard?	Range	Highest Annual Average	Range	Highest Annual Average	Source of Substance
Chlorate	2013	ppb	NL=800	n/a	No	66–200	127	38–450	171	Byproduct of drinking water chlorination

Organic Chemicals	Year Tested	Unit	SMCL	PHG (MCLG)	Exceeded Standard?	Range	Average	Range	Average	Source of Substance
Chlorodifluoromethane (Freon 22)	2013	ppb	n/a	n/a	No	n/a	n/a	ND–3	0.5	Refrigerant

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2013 Water Quality Table (Continued)

Unregulated Compounds Detected at Negligible Amounts

	Year Tested	Unit	SMCL	PHG (MCLG)	Exceeded Standard?	Value	Range	Average	Source of Substance
Acesulfame-K	2013	ppt	n/a	n/a	No	20	n/a	n/a	Manmade compound
DEET	2013	ppt	n/a	n/a	No	10	n/a	n/a	Manmade compound
Iohexal	2013	ppt	n/a	n/a	No	74	n/a	n/a	Manmade compound
Methylparaben	2013	ppt	n/a	n/a	No	46	n/a	n/a	Manmade compound
Sucralose	2013	ppt	n/a	n/a	No	940	n/a	n/a	Manmade compound

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For More Information, Visit **www.calwater.com**

Thanks for taking the time to learn more about your water quality! Even more information awaits you at www.calwater.com. Visit our web site to get information about your account, water use history, water rates, and water system. You will also find water-saving tips and news about water conservation programs and rebates available in your area.

Other links to check out:

» Lead in water

» Water treatment and disinfection

» Protecting the water supply

» Pharmaceuticals in water

» Chromium-6

» Drought news

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