

Dear Neighbor:

Southern California is facing serious drought conditions, having just experienced its driest year on record. In addition, ecological problems in the Bay-Delta area mean that less water will be available for export to Southern California next year. Los Angeles Mayor Villiargosa, as well as most water agencies, have asked for voluntary conservation from residents. However, if dry conditions persist next year, water rationing may need to occur. We all need to work together to conserve water, because any water we save today will be water that will remain in the reservoir or groundwater basin for us to use next year.

I have noticed that there is algae growing in the gutter of our street. This indicates a constant flow of water, and is indicative of inefficient irrigation practices or possibly a leak. Here's what you can do:

1. Check your sprinklers to make sure they are working properly, and the water is being applied to the landscape, not cement.

2. Do not run sprinklers between 10am and 6pm, as most of the water applied will be lost to evaporation. Watering in the early morning is usually best.

3. Water your landscape in cycles by reducing the number of minutes on your timer and using multiple start times spaced one hour apart. This allows the water to soak into the soil and avoids runoff.

4. Make sure your sprinklers are set to apply the right amount of water. This can easily be determined by visiting the Water – Use It Wisely Website at: <http://www.wateruseitwisely.com/waterguide/index.shtml>.

5. Limit other uses of water outdoors by using a broom instead of a hose to clean sidewalks. If washing a car, don't let the faucet run; instead, use a bucket and a spray stopper, and give it a quick rinse at the end.

If none of these measures reduce the amount of runoff into the gutter, it may be indicative of a leak. You may need to contact a gardener or landscaping company for assistance.

Water is a precious resource here in Southern California. The majority of our water comes to us from hundreds of miles away, and each of these areas has been impacted by water exports, persistent drought, and other factors. To find out more about these important issues, as well as get more water conservation tips, visit Aquaformia, the Southern California water blog at the following address: <http://aquaformia.com>.

Thank you for your help!