



## **You can prevent drought restrictions and additional surcharges**

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In October, to avoid a drought situation, Rockland County officials asked residents and businesses to voluntarily curb their water usage. Dry weather had left Lake Deforest reservoir, Rockland's main drinking water supply, at about 5% lower than is typical for October. Had it been summer and people were using more water outside, mandatory restrictions likely would have been imposed, said Daniel Miller, Rockland county's hydrologist.

NYS' Public Service Commission recently halted United Water N.Y.'s plans to build a \$150 million desalination plant that would remove salt and pollutants from Hudson River water. Rendering the water suitable for drinking, United Water said the plant would prevent against drought—but at what cost? As New Yorkers, we need to consider these two events and be aware as to how they affect us. Water conservation is not a government problem or responsibility, but rather one that we can control. After the plan for the water plant was blocked, United Water proposed to impose a \$60 annual surcharge on customers to recoup costs already spent (\$56 million they claim), plus \$4 million in interest. A surcharge, for a plant that has not yet even started to be built. What surcharges might have been imposed after the \$150 million plant was erected? To prevent additional charges that affect our bottom line and avoid having drought restrictions (some residents painted their lawns green during the 2012 drought to combat lawn watering restrictions) imposed upon us, New Yorkers must make water conservation their problem—and with little effort. Installing water saving toilets and tamper-proof shower and sink regulators, such as The Water Scrooge, saves thousands of gallons of water per unit a year and up to 40% annually on water and energy costs.

The system is designed to create a steady water flow at the desired level, maintaining consistent water pressure while reducing water usage. Set to a flow rate of 1.5 gpm, there is no noticeable difference in pressure or water flow that that of a conventional 2.5 gpm showerhead; yet the savings in terms of gallons of water and costs are almost halved:

365 days per year x 10 minutes per day x 2.5 gpm (conventional shower head) = 9,125 gallons per year

365 days per year x 10 minutes per day x 1.5 gpm (low-flow shower head) = 5,475 gallons per year

David Schwartz is the inventor of The Water Scrooge and CEO of DS Magic Tech, LLC, Lynnbrook, N.Y.