

As people across the country protest in defense of Black lives, the Sierra Club recognizes the need to dismantle systemic racism in the United States and within our own organization. We must reckon with how white supremacy -- both past and present -- has shaped our institutions and do the critical anti-racism work necessary to repair the harm done. The environmental movement does not exist in a vacuum, and it is our responsibility to use our power to help abolish systemic racism which is destroying lives, communities, and the planet.

The [COVID-19 crisis](#) has not passed and continues to [disproportionately harm](#) Black, Indigenous, and Latinx people and other communities of color. The pandemic has revealed how the communities hardest hit are often the same people that suffer from high levels of pollution and poor access to healthcare. The fight for environmental justice cannot be separated from the fight for racial justice.



# The True Cost

How much will rate payers actually pay for water from the proposed Poseidon Ocean Desalination Plant?

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# Pros & Cons of Ocean Desalination

( extracting salt from seawater to make it drinkable)

## Poseidon Says

- ▶ More water
- ▶ Reliability
- ▶ Good union jobs
- ▶ Approximately 40-50 MG/day

## We Know

- ▶ OC has enough water
- ▶ OCWD - 100 MGD, can be increased to 130 MGD
- ▶ Should clean up contaminated North Basin
- ▶ Energy intensive = more greenhouse gases
- ▶ Plant can't operate with red tides
- ▶ Destroys marine larvae & plankton
- ▶ Byproduct discharge (brine) into the ocean creates dead zones
- ▶ The most expensive water
- ▶ Increased cost to end user
- ▶ Conservation
- ▶ Other shovel ready projects to create jobs

# Access to Clean, Affordable Water Is A Human Right

- ▶ Millions of Americans today can't afford to pay their water bills as rates have risen 80% in the last 10 years
- ▶ Did you know that 1.7 million people in the US have no access to basic running water?
- ▶ The water affordability crisis comes as the Covid-19 pandemic underlines the importance of access to clean water
- ▶ Between 2010 and 2018 water bills rose by at least 27%
- ▶ Water bills exceeding 4% of household income are considered, unaffordable
- ▶ In **San Diego**, the average bill was \$1,416 in 2018
- ▶ Among the poor, one in seven faced average water bills upward of 12% of the total household income in 2018.

# An Environmental & Social Justice Issue

- ▶ Many people are facing rising and unaffordable bills for running water, and risk being disconnected or losing their homes via liens if they cannot pay
- ▶ Just like mortgage foreclosures, water shutoffs and liens can force affected households/renters to abandon their homes
- ▶ Governor Newsom issued a moratorium on water disconnections because of Covid 19, because we are all aware this is an unspoken about issue
- ▶ Stephen Gasteyer, professor of sociology at Michigan State University said: “Water rates have gone up dramatically - mostly in places where people are also struggling with food, housing and other basic services. It’s a symptom of the inequalities and segregation problems we have in the US, where poor people are agglomerated in particular places and local governments are shouldered with the responsibility for raising revenue for services.”

# How much will Poseidon water cost the end user?

- ▶ Marketing research has shown if you tell the end user something is about \$5, they're most likely to support it
- ▶ OCWD groundwater costs \$487 per acre-foot per year
- ▶ Imported water costs \$1,130 per acre-foot per year
- ▶ Desalinated ocean water cost \$2,125 to \$2,368 per acre-foot in 2017
- ▶ Poseidon claims your water bill will only go up between \$3-\$6 /month
- ▶ How can that be when the cost per acre foot is:
  - ▶ 5 x \$402 - OCWD groundwater
  - ▶ 2 x \$1059 - imported water
  - ▶ As an end user, your rates go up to pay for infrastructure maintenance, new projects, and water rate hikes
  - ▶ OCWD voted to support the Delta Tunnel Project
  - ▶ MWD voted to raise their rates over a 2 year period by 3% & 4% respectively

# 2019 Proposed Hikes in Fullerton

Meter Size	Current Monthly Rate	Proposed Monthly Rate
5/8"	\$14.78	\$26.07
1"	\$17.74	\$41.30
1 1/2"	\$32.52	\$79.39
2"	\$45.82	\$125.08
3"	\$79.81	\$246.95
4"	\$113.81	\$384.04
6"	\$180.32	\$764.86
8"	\$302.99	\$1,221.84
10"	\$441.92	\$1,831.15
12"	(na)	\$2,573.75

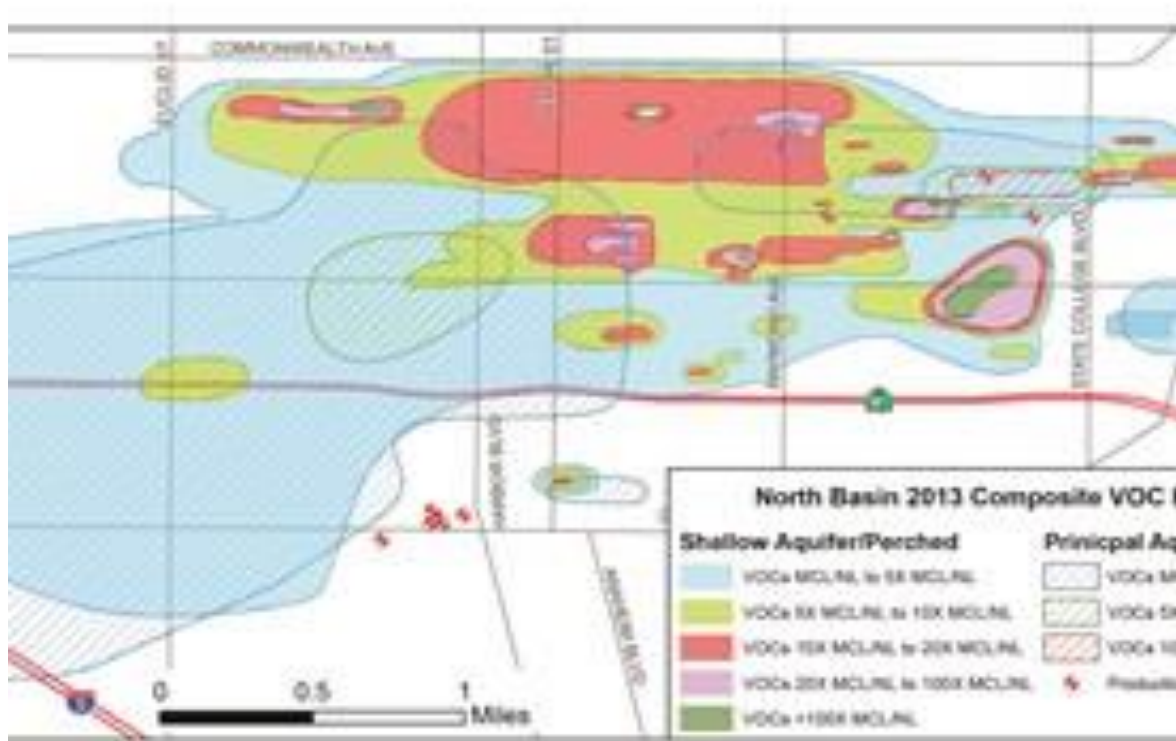
- ▶ OCWD raised their rates in 2019 from \$462 to \$487 per ACF
- ▶ That's a \$25 difference, so we're already at \$3 per month
- ▶ Let's say an additional \$5 and \$7 per month for the Delta
- ▶ Another \$5 to clean up water contamination in the North Basin
- ▶ And another \$6 for Poseidon

# Renters Always Pay More

- ▶ While the average water bills vary from system to system, overall during the past decade water rates have generally increased faster than the Consumer Price Index for the past decade
- ▶ It has been common practice for landlords to include the cost of water and sewer in the tenant's rent.
- ▶ Landlords pass on the cost of a water rate increase to their renters, not by \$6 per month but by \$50+ per month as part of a rental increase
- ▶ A tenant has no rights to fight a water rate increase
- ▶ There's the water revenue bond passthrough to tenants
- ▶ Worsening the housing crisis and leading to homelessness



# The North Basin Plume



- ▶ Groundwater in part of the basin located in Fullerton, Anaheim and Placentia
- ▶ Known contamination from the early-1960s through mid-1980s
- ▶ Contaminants from industrial degreasing chemicals referred to as volatile organic compounds (VOCs)
- ▶ Manufacturing facilities, auto shops, dry cleaners, metal-plating and circuit board manufacturers, and other businesses used VOCs for removing oils and grease from metal parts or as part of their process

# What are the alternatives?

- ▶ Invest in shovel ready projects which promote good green union jobs
- ▶ Invest in urban stormwater capture projects
- ▶ Promote more conservation
- ▶ Increase capacity: Orange County Groundwater Basin provides approximately 77 % of the water supply for residents and businesses in north and central Orange County
- ▶ Subsidies and monies going towards Poseidon should be invested in remediation of the North Plume
- ▶ Put up or shut up in cleaning up the North Basin plume
- ▶ The area of groundwater contamination is approximately five miles long and up to two miles wide
- ▶ Groundwater contamination has migrated into deeper parts of the aquifer that serve as a source of drinking water
- ▶ OCWD estimates its cost for the interim RI/FS at \$3.5 million. OCWD has received a Proposition 1 grant from the California State Water Resources Control Board for nearly half of these costs.

Questions?