

Queens Civic Congress offers a [plan](#) already endorsed by the Queens Borough Board. We hope to discuss this [plan](#) at forums in the other boroughs and get City Hall to embrace our [reforms](#). See QCC President Corey Bearak's comments below.

## Great, you saved water! Now fight the proposed rate hike

BY [Clare Trapasso](#)

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Thursday, February 4th 2010, 10:57 AM

CONSERVING WATER is typically a good thing - except when you're penalized for your frugality.

Elected officials are urging people to speak out against the Water Board's potential double-digit water rate hike at a public hearing in [St. Albans](#) on Feb. 16.

The rate hike is needed, officials have said, because people are using less water, which means less revenue.

"The only way to stop the soaking of taxpayers is by showing up and making our voices heard," [City Councilman Peter Koo \(R-Flushing\)](#) said. "We must remain ever watchful, informed and ready to fight."

He attended a [Queens Borough Board](#) meeting Monday where a representative from the city Department of Environmental Protection spoke about the proposed rate hike.

The agency is holding public hearings in each borough to discuss water rates, which could climb as much as 14.3%, according to documents obtained by the Daily News. That's on top of the 12.9% increase in 2009 and 14.5% hike in 2008.

The Queens meeting will be held at 6 p.m. Feb. 16 at the [Majority Baptist Church](#), 115-21 Farmers Blvd. in St. Albans.

The water system is operated by the DEP, but the Water Board determine its finances. A DEP spokeswoman said a rate hike proposal will be ready in April.

The rates are set to go up because the public has been using 12% to 13% less water over the last few years, former [DEP Commissioner Steve Lawitts](#) previously told the Daily News.

That didn't sit well with Koo. "This is against our common sense," said Koo, who plans to picket the Feb. 16 meeting. "You don't increase prices when people buy less."

The average annual water bill for a single-family house is about \$900, according to the [Independent Budget Office](#). If the rate increase is approved, that bill would go up to more than \$1,000.

[Corey Bearak](#), president of the Queens [Civic Congress](#), said another hike would be outrageous.

"People are struggling, and this takes money right out of their pockets," said Bearak. "It disproportionately punishes the middle class and working families."

With [Adam Lisberg](#)

Read more: [http://www.nydailynews.com/ny\\_local/queens/2010/02/04/2010-02-04\\_great\\_you\\_saved\\_water\\_now\\_fight\\_the\\_proposed\\_rate\\_hike.html#ixzz0eiMwbhoj](http://www.nydailynews.com/ny_local/queens/2010/02/04/2010-02-04_great_you_saved_water_now_fight_the_proposed_rate_hike.html#ixzz0eiMwbhoj)