

Beijing announces water price hike

2009-12-02 21:16 BJT

The hike in Beijing's water price aims to encourage conservation and recycling in a bid to ease water shortages in the city. By subsidizing low-income residents, officials say the price hike will not impose an excessive financial burden on ordinary people.

Authorities say Beijing is short in water resources. With an average of less than 300 cubic meters of water resources for every citizen, the city's water resource level is far lower than the 1,000 cubic meter international standard. Over the past decade, the water supply shortage has been aggravated by 9 years of drought. Officials say the price hike has three main goals.

First, to establish and perfect a water-pricing mechanism that makes sufficient use of price leverage in the allocation of water resources.

Second, to strengthen sewage treatment capacity. The increase in the sewage disposal fee will be funneled into the treatment of wastewater. By 2012, the city should make use of 80 percent of its used water, up from 57 percent in 2008.

Third, to encourage water conservation. The higher water fee will be used to set up a fund to support and encourage resource-saving, environmental protection and improved water use efficiency.

Authorities also say that subsidies will be given to those covered by a low-income social security network amounting to 10 cubic meters per household per month. Other measures include the imposition of stricter oversight of water-supply companies to control cost, and to improve service standards for residents.

THREE GOALS OF WATER PRICE HIKE

1. Establish and perfect a water-pricing mechanism that makes sufficient use of price leverage in the allocation of water resources.
2. Strengthen sewage treatment capacity. By 2012, the city should make use of 80 percent of its used water, up from 57 percent in 2008.
3. Encourage water conservation. Set up a fund to support and encourage resource-saving, environmental protection and improved water use efficiency.

Editor: Liu Fang | **Source:** CCTV.com