



## Marion County Board of County Commissioners

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### A UTILITY PLAYER

#### **EPA Watersense** (Jan. 6, 2010) –

Why would a water utility, an organization that sells water, want to encourage people to use less of it?

Surprisingly, both utilities and their customers can benefit substantially when they use water more efficiently.

For starters, many water systems across the country do not generate enough revenue to cover their operating costs. That means for every gallon sold, more money flows out than flows in. For these utilities, selling less water actually improves the bottom line.

For systems on a firmer financial footing, selling less water may decrease profits. But sales losses can be offset when treatment, disposal, and energy costs come down because less water is processed. On average, these savings can offset about 30 percent of the losses associated with selling less water.

Most importantly, the U.S. population is projected to increase significantly over the next 35 years, and virtually every water system will face pressure to meet growing demand. Put simply, the best way to avoid the need for costly large-scale expansion tomorrow is to start increasing water efficiency today.

#### Benefits Beyond the Bottom Line

Besides saving water and reducing costs, water efficiency offers many other benefits:

- Less water withdrawn from rivers, lakes, and aquifers, which keeps these water bodies healthy.
- Improved water quality due to increased river flows.
- Less energy required to pump and treat the water, and therefore less greenhouse gas emissions.
- Less wastewater that requires collection, treatment, and disposal.
- Less pollution from treated wastewater in our streams and waterways.

## Savings in Action

Water utilities across the United States are saving substantial amounts of water by encouraging water efficiency. These savings often translate into capital and operating savings, which allow utilities to defer or avoid significant expenses for water supply facilities and wastewater facilities. A case study from the

Massachusetts Water Resources Authority is featured below:

### Massachusetts Water Resources Authority

The Massachusetts Water Resource Authority (MWRA) is a wholesale water provider for more than 2 million people in the greater Boston area. In 1986, MWRA began a water conservation program including leak detection and repair, plumbing retrofits, water management, education, and water meter improvements. By 1997, these efforts succeeded in reducing average daily water demand from 336 million to 256 million gallons per day (mgd). This allowed MWRA to defer a water supply expansion project and reduce the capacity of the treatment plant, resulting in total savings ranging from \$1.39 million to \$1.91 million per mgd.



For additional case studies, visit [WaterSense Partner Profiles](#).

This article can be found at: [http://www.epa.gov/watersense/water\\_efficiency/a\\_utility\\_player.html](http://www.epa.gov/watersense/water_efficiency/a_utility_player.html)



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