Water Recycling Standby Charge
The West Basin Municipal Water District (West Basin) Standby Charge was initiated in 1991 to build a 70,000 to 100,000 acre-feet per year water recycling facility.

Water recycling facility construction is typically built in phases to allow time to develop customers and build the appropriate sized plant, pipelines, and other infrastructure. To meet the region’s water demands, as well as its original authorization of 70,000 to 100,000 acre feet per year, the Edward C. Little Water Recycling Facility (ECLWRF) has undergone several expansions to increase its production of high quality recycled water (see bar graph below).

Today, the West Basin recycling program is a model for recycling projects around the world. Visitors from Asia, Australia, the Middle East and other areas tour the facility each year to learn about its innovative technology.

The ECLWRF is recognized by the National Water Research Institute as one of six National Centers for Water Treatment Technologies in the U.S. and has received awards from agencies such as the State of California’s Flex Your Power campaign, the National WateReuse Association, Southern California Edison and the Design-Build Institute.

Benefits of Recycled Water
West Basin supplies approximately 37,000 acre-feet per year of five different types of recycled water throughout the coastal L.A. area. West Basin’s water recycling program provides many benefits:

- Combined with conservation, water recycling has reduced potable water use, protecting rate payers from incurring penalties and significantly higher rates;
- Helps the region comply with the State mandated 20% reduction in water use by 2020;
- Replenishes the local groundwater basin with near-distilled quality water, protecting our groundwater from saltwater intrusion;
- Saves energy by producing water locally instead of transporting and pumping water from 200-400 miles away;
- Reduces the amount of sewer water discharged into Santa Monica Bay by 11 billion gallons a year, improving ocean water quality for the region;
- Saves enough potable water to meet the needs of roughly 300,000 people each year.

Every dollar collected by the Standby Charge continues to be used to build the water recycling facility toward its full capacity.
Five Types of Water
West Basin is the only agency in the world with the ability to provide five different types of custom-made recycled waters that have undergone various advanced treatment processes to meet the specific needs of public, commercial and industrial users.

The region successfully uses approximately 37,000 acre-feet per year of recycled water for landscape irrigation, cooling towers, refineries, parks, ballfields, and innovative applications such as street sweeping and toilet flushing.

West Basin produces high quality recycled water for injection into the local groundwater basin to prevent seawater intrusion and to replenish groundwater supplies, a priority for the coastal Los Angeles region. By using recycled water for non-potable uses customers are conserving billions of gallons of drinking water for the region.

Standby Charge Quick Facts
- Adopted in 1991 to fund construction of water recycling facilities capable of producing 70,000 to 100,000 acre-feet per year;
- At the time, the State had endured one of the worst droughts in its history (1987-1992) and water resource managers needed to quickly develop new, local water supplies; the need for local supplies is even greater today;
- The Standby Charge provides approximately $9.7 million each year to pay for the water recycling facilities; it is reviewed annually and considered for reauthorization by the West Basin Board of Directors at a public hearing;
- $24 is assessed annually on the property tax bill for the average single family household; $16 for multi-family;
- Industrial and commercial landowners pay a higher rate ($120 a year, more if they own more than 1-acre of land);
- Without the Standby Charge, water rates will rise for all West Basin customers;
- West Basin is recognized for excellence in reporting by the Government Finance Officer’s Association and California Society of Municipal Finance Officers, and holds a high credit rating of AA- from S&P and Aa2 from Moody’s;
- Water recycling is needed to meet the State-mandated 20% water use reduction by the year 2020;
- The Standby Charge has helped leverage roughly $85 million in federal funding, $10 million in state funding, $150 million in regional funding, and $140 million in local funding in support of the recycled water program.