

Water fees set to rise

THE NEWS

As costs rise and supply falls, water fees in the capital are expected to increase in March, an official announced on Monday.

Mexico City Water System (SACM) Director Ramón Aguirre Díaz said that water administrators and lawmakers from the Federal District Assembly (ALDF) will soon agree on the fees.

However, National Water Commission (Conagua) Director José Luis Luege Tamargo said that raising fees is useless because many people don't even pay their bills. Rather, he said that first efforts should be focused on improving the metropolitan area's water infrastructure.

Luege added that water bills go unpaid because of faulty and inadequate metering. Capital water costs have been too low for many years, he said, and have not kept up with actual costs.

Conagua over the weekend changed a damaged pipe in the Cutzamala System, which supplies 20 percent of the metro area's drinking water. As the country celebrated a national holiday, Conagua cut supply by nearly 40 percent. The city faces a severe scarcity of drinking water. The seven-dam Cutzamala Reservoir has been affected by the lack of rain for much of 2009. Advertising campaigns have urged capital residents to use less water and improve conservation habits.

