

Hook-up payments

A recent letter writer who supports the Town of Apple Valley's hostile takeover of Liberty Utilities made three curious statements ("For eminent domain," Daily Press, Jan. 29, 2016).

First, he writes that his house has three water heaters, as if that helps explain why he uses 17 ccf of water per billing cycle. Our house has two water heaters, and my wife and I use only 3 ccf per billing cycle, and we're home all day long. Here's the deal: Water heaters don't use water — people do.

Second, he persists in complaining about substantial water rate increases for households that use too much water. Well, we live in a desert, and high water use is not sustainable. Once again, the actual wording of the rate increase from the CPUC is "[...] [A]n average residential customer that achieves the conservation goals set by the Governor's Executive Order will see its [bi-monthly] bill increase by \$3.41 and 2.64 percent only." Note there are several keys here. If you use more than average, the Governor has issued an order that you pay more. It isn't the fault of Liberty Utilities that you use a lot of water, or that they have been ordered to raise your water rates when you do. Anyone who doesn't want to pay the penalty only has to use less water, which each of us should be striving to do anyway.

Finally, he points out that I never bring up that we the ratepayers pay for new hook-ups. That's because residential customers don't pay for hook-ups up front. Hook-ups are a service provided by Liberty Utilities, and the cost is amortized over several years as part of our bill. On the other hand, should the Town of Apple Valley succeed in seizing Liberty Utilities, then yes, ratepayers will indeed be paying for hook-ups. There, I've mentioned it.

— *Greg Raven, Apple Valley*

Valley Voices Opinion published in the Feb. 8, 2016 issue of *The Daily Press*