

‘Excessive water users’ fine would elevate drought-shaming

By Alexei Koseff, Sacramento Bee

When Oakland A’s executive Billy Beane found himself on the East Bay Municipal Utility District’s list of its biggest water users in October, he released a statement that he was “more than displeased and embarrassed by the usage” and promised to take “immediate action” to repair irrigation and pool leaks recently discovered at his Danville home.

Welcome to a new era of “drought-shaming.” As California enters its fifth year of a historic dry period and residents buckle down to reduce urban water use by one-fourth, a novel strategy adopted by the East Bay water utility has turned the spotlight on the region’s most wasteful consumers – among them the rich and famous – and could become the basis for statewide policy.

Last month, Sen. Jerry Hill, D-San Mateo, introduced Senate Bill 814, which would require local water districts to set a definition of “excessive water use” and then fine customers by up to \$500 for each hundred cubic feet, or about 748 gallons, of water above the limit when the state has declared emergency drought conditions.

Read the whole story