

# Water Rates and Monthly Bills

# In the News

## • Circle of Blue

### THE PRICE OF WATER: 2015

Combined water, sewer and stormwater prices for households in 30 major U.S. cities.



**Water** prices pay for treating, pumping, and delivering water, while sewer prices cover the cost of cleansing the water that goes down the drain.



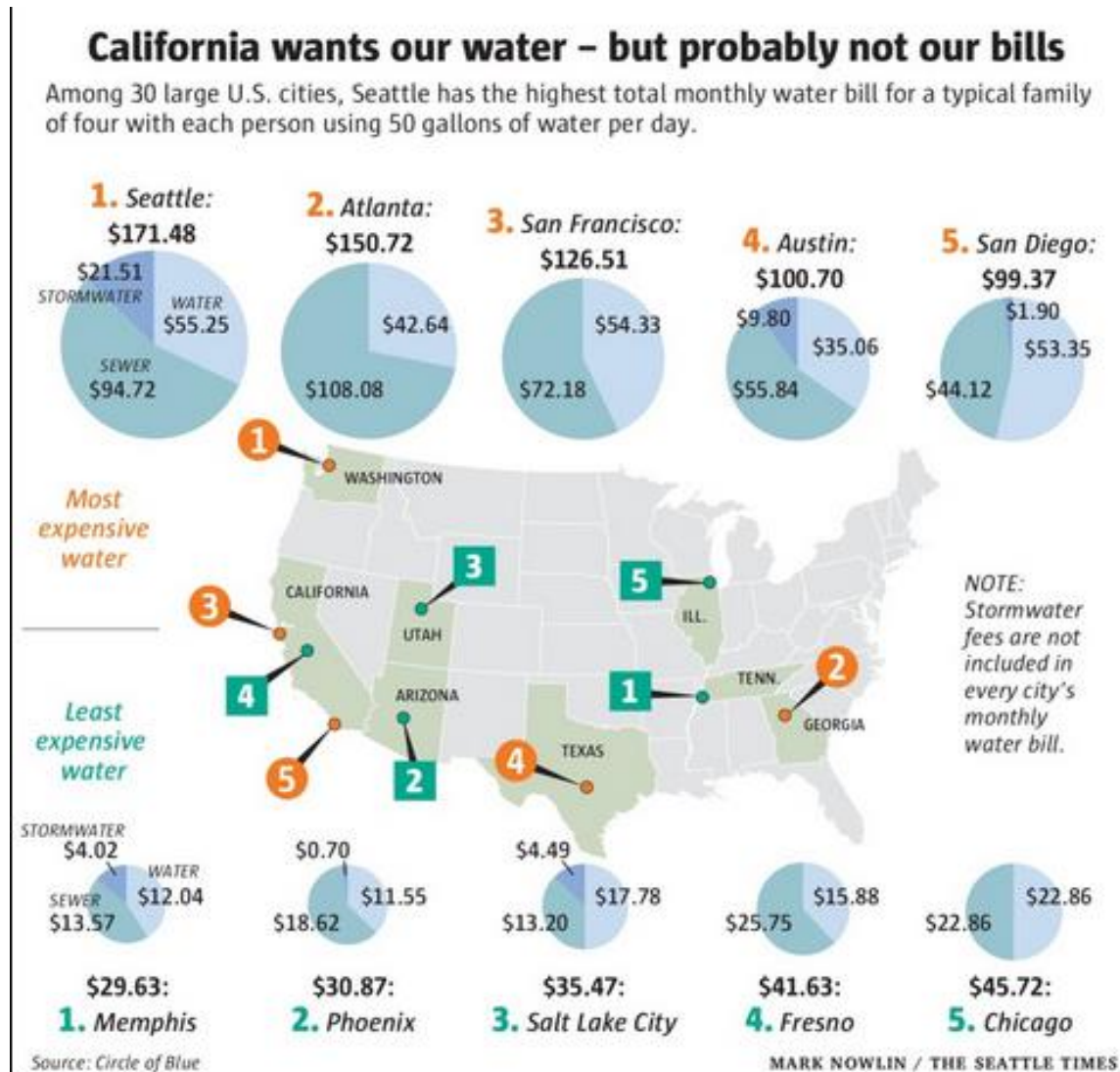
**Sewer** prices are often higher than water prices because more energy and chemicals are required for treatment. Following the Clean Water Act, the federal government gave grants for new treatment plants during the 1970s and 1980s. Over the past three decades, however, new spending has been cut for local sewer infrastructure.



**Stormwater** fees are not included in every city's monthly bill. Some cities use general tax revenues to pay for projects to reduce polluted runoff from streets and parking lots. However, these projects must then compete for funds with other departments like police and schools.

# In the News

- Picked up by Seattle Times

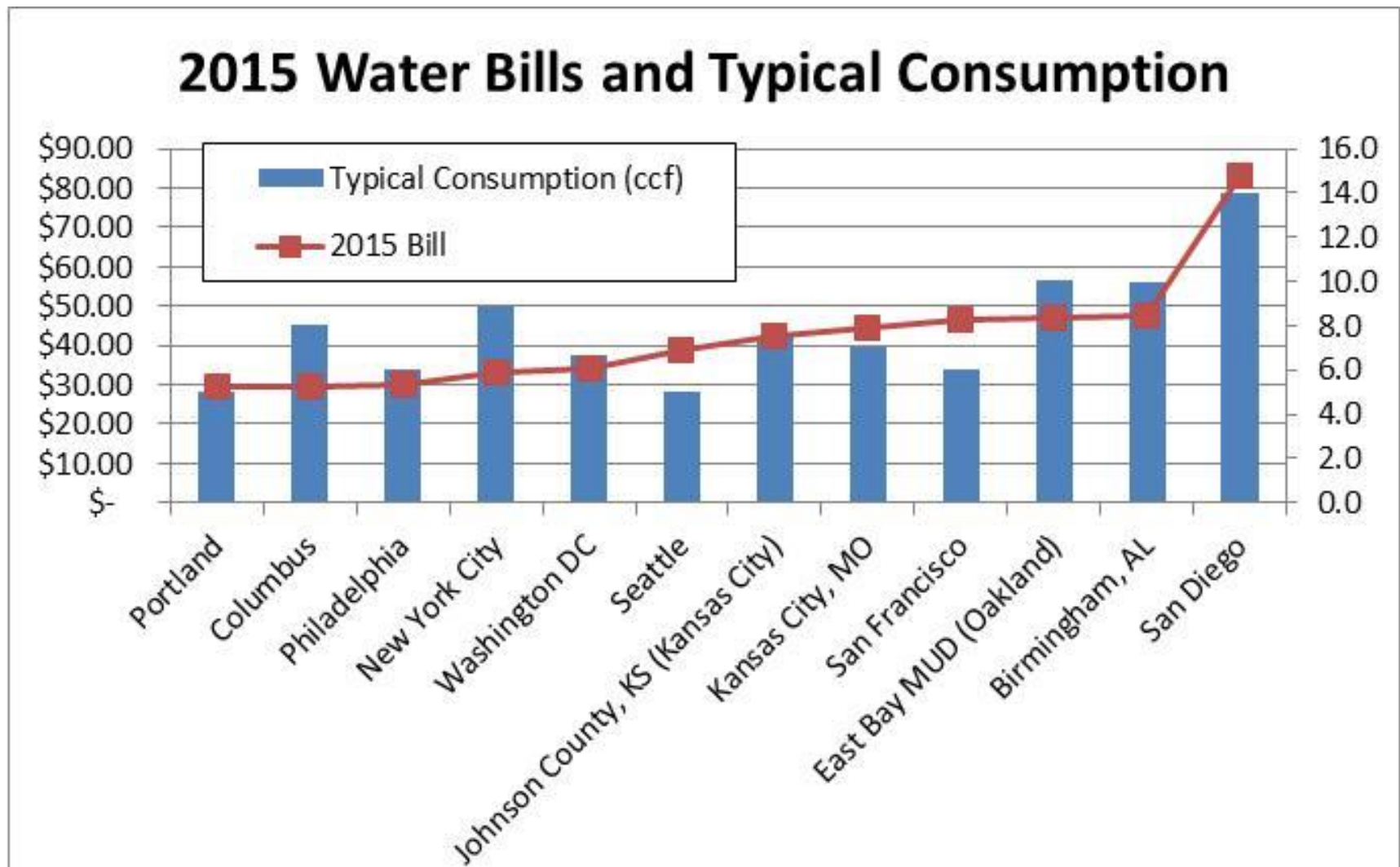


# Difficult to Compare Between Cities

- **Drinking water and sewer**
  - Studies assume uniform per capita use across all utilities (not true)
  - Rate structures for drinking water and sewer are very different across utilities
  - To compare, look at typical household bills based on typical usage
- **Stormwater is treated very differently across utilities, hard to compare**
  - Stormwater utility
  - Embedded in sewer rates
  - Part of City's General Fund
  - Other

# Focus on Drinking Water

- Typical Monthly Bills and Usage



# Seattle's Per Capita Water Use

- **Lower than most utilities**
- **Due to conservation programs and plumbing code changes**
- **Offsets need for new water supplies**
  - Huge benefit for ratepayers

# Typical Monthly Bills

- **For drinking water, sewer, drainage**
  - Circle of Blue: \$310
  - Seattle Times: \$178
- **Based on SPU's average household:**

Water	\$38.93
Sewer	\$50.91
Drainage	\$29.20
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$119.04</b>

# Summary

- **Rate / monthly bill surveys are oversimplified**
- **Utility rates and bills are difficult to compare across cities**
- **SPU provides good value for our customers**