

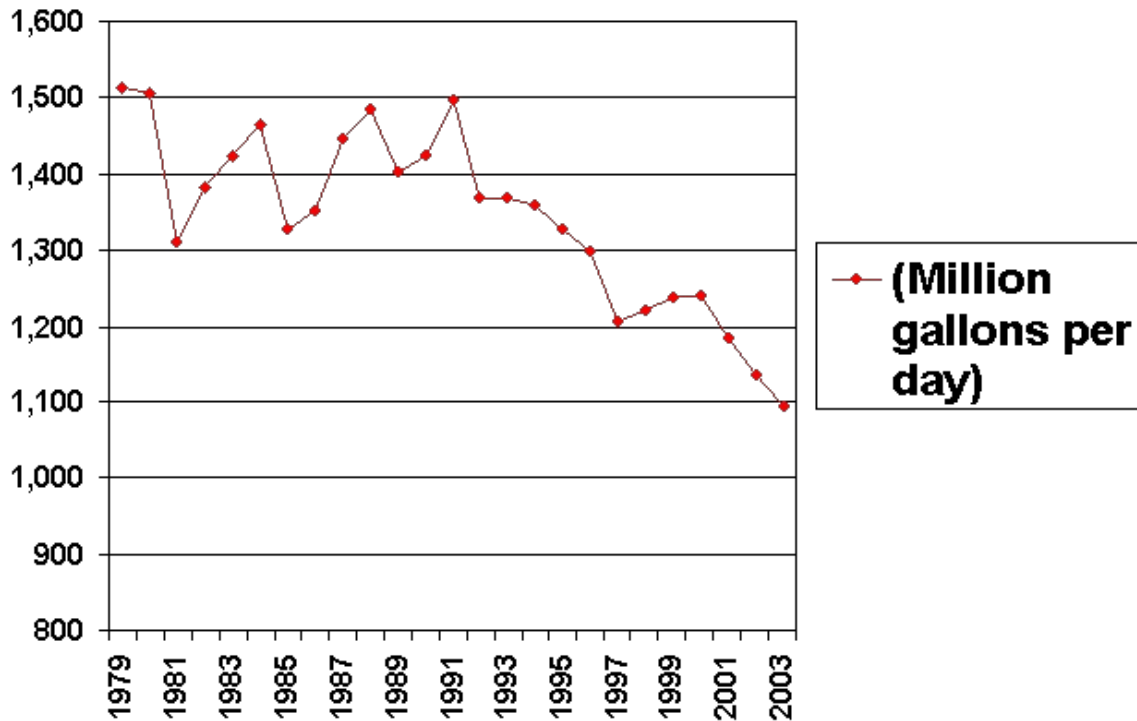


Can New York Replicate Water Success with Energy

Posted by [Glenn](#) on January 20, 2007 - 12:59pm in [The Oil Drum: Local](#)

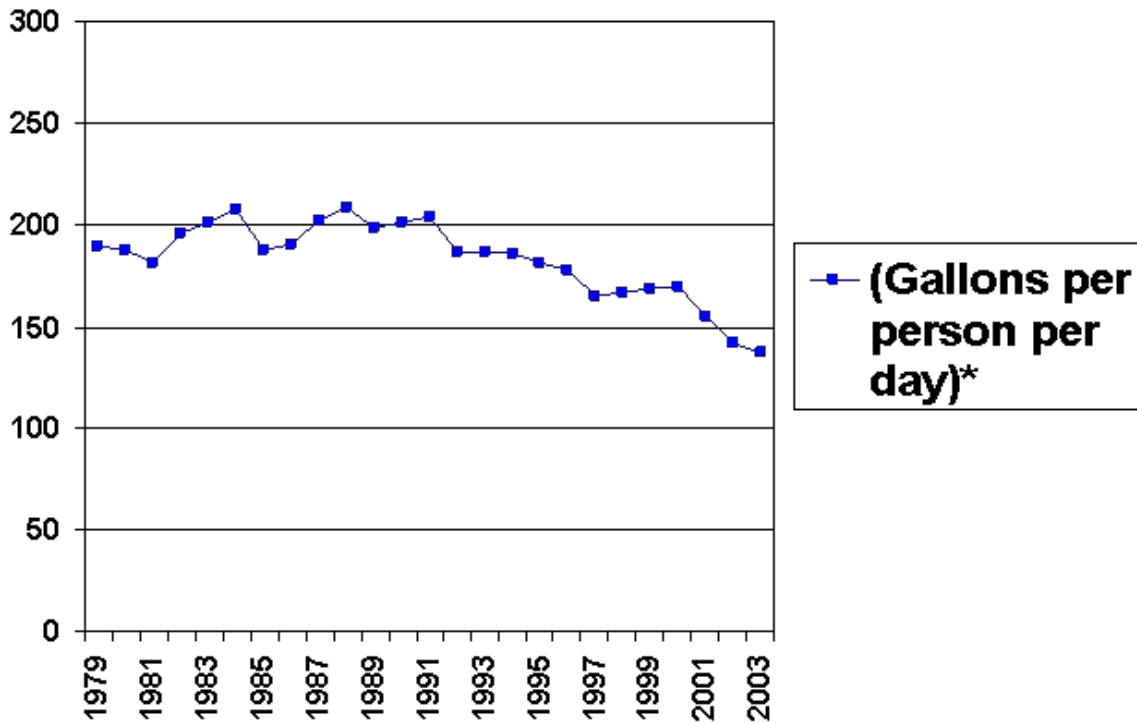
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New York does have a successful sustainability model that should be studied for lessons on how conserve electricity: WATER

From 1979 to 2005 the city reduced it's total consumption of water by 28% from 1.512 Billion gallons of water a day to 1.086 Billion gallons of water a day. At the same time the city had increasing population, making this feat even more impressive as per capita water consumption fell from a high of 208 gallons per person in 1988 to 136 in 2003.



And most of what made this successful was a concerted effort to install more efficient infrastructure, find and eliminate waste in the system and price people more directly on what they use.

From a NY Times article in [October 2006](#) (behind the paywall) we learn:

Experts say the large drop in water consumption is a phenomenon more akin to the drop in crime and in the welfare rolls: products of government policy.

The city now requires water-saving plumbing fixtures and devices in renovations and new construction, it has been more diligent in finding and fixing leaks, and since the late 1980's it has been metering residential customers' water use. (Even so, water bills are often challenged and some go unpaid.) Before then, property owners were charged a flat fee based on a building's street frontage and number of plumbing fixtures.

There are some pretty direct parallels. Requiring or heavily incentivizing investment in energy efficient lighting and household appliances when folks are renovating or building would have a huge impact on electrical demand. New York should pass additional green building legislation to include an energy efficiency code for new private development or household renovations.

The City should identify buildings, households, businesses that use significantly above average amounts of electricity and inspect them for any violations of city codes and assuming they are operating within the law, offer them incentives to reduce their electric bill.

Finally it's time to rationalize how people get billed for their electric consumption. Currently there is a huge component of the electric and gas bill that is fixed and remains in place no matter how low your electric consumption is. New York State should move electricity pricing to a straight

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variable cost that increases the charge per KhH with higher consumption.



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