

## **Electric Submeters—Promoting Energy Conservation**

The City of Santa Barbara has a longstanding tradition of promoting sustainable practices, one of which is conserving electricity. AC electricity is provided to over 1,100 slips in the harbor, at an average annual cost of \$180,000. Electrical use among the four marinas is the third highest of all City facilities, behind the El Estero Wastewater Treatment Plan and the airport terminal.

No extra fee or surcharge is currently added to slip fees for electricity or other utilities/services such as water, natural gas, or janitorial. Since no one pays for their individual use of electricity, there exists no incentive to conserve. In fact, there is a tremendous disparity of electrical use among boaters. Preliminary meter-reading results indicate that approximately 1/3 of all boats use little or no electricity, while 20% of boats use 80% of the electricity. This cannot be attributed entirely to liveaboards, who you would expect to use more electricity. With so few boats using so much electricity, having everyone pay for their respective use is fair and will hopefully provide incentive to conserve.

Installing electric submeters at all harbor slips has been a significant task. Fortunately, two projects were planned in 2007 that incorporated installation of electric submeters at all slips. The projects took nine years (completed in 2018), providing the necessary infrastructure to track individual use and charge slip permittees accordingly.

Before implementing an electrical fee, the Waterfront Department will give slip permittees two months' worth of each boat's electrical-use data, so permittees can review their use and consider ways to conserve electricity. After that, slip permittees will be billed at the same rate Southern California Edison charges the harbor.

A few practical tips for conserving electricity on boats include reducing moisture with a dehumidifier instead of a heater, running electrical systems off DC electrical systems (batteries) instead of AC, and using solar panels or wind generators to charge batteries. More details on the Electric Submetering Program, including proposed budget adjustments, can be found on the Waterfront's website.

<https://www.santabarbaraca.gov/gov/brdcomm/dm/harbor/agendas.asp>