



# City of Santa Barbara

Parks and Recreation Department

10/22/15

[www.sbparksandrecreation.com](http://www.sbparksandrecreation.com)

## A MESSAGE TO LOS BAÑOS SWIMMING POOL USERS REGARDING WATER QUALITY:

### Administration

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### Community Services

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The Aquatic staff constantly monitors the water quality at Los Baños pool. Staff is especially sensitive to this challenge during the current Stage-III drought restrictions.

Recently some modifications were made to our regular pool operating procedures that we believe have slightly improved the experience for the early morning swimmers. These will remain temporary measures as we continue to investigate other options.

The Los Baños facility and pool water is fully compliant with the Santa Barbara Health and Safety Code. This compliance is required regardless of how many individuals use the pool or how infrequently it has been drained. There are times when pool chemical fluctuations occur. However, if the compliance with the Health and Safety Code is ever compromised, an immediate closure will occur until the problem is remedied and the facility is safe to re-open.

The salt taste experienced by swimmers is the byproduct of using liquid chlorine (sodium hypochlorite). This salt taste has been exacerbated by the extended period of extremely warm temperatures. The combination of above-average ambient temperatures with more individuals choosing to swim to cool off during the day necessitates the use of more chlorine in order to remain compliant with the Health and Safety Code.

Los Baños was most recently drained on March 23, 2014. The current Stage-III drought restrictions only permit draining 1/3 of the pool water. Los Baños contains over 360,000 gallons of water, and based on my 17 years of experience with this facility, draining 1/3 of the pool water will not significantly improve the water quality. Instead, we would be wasting 120,000 gallons of water during the worst drought crisis in California history. It is important to note that after the drought that ended in 1994, Los Baños was not drained until 1998 (4 years later).

Staff has been researching the possibility of contracting with a mobile company to perform Reverse Osmosis (RO) for the existing pool water. We have determined that this is not a feasible option for the following reasons:

- The process to treat all 366,000 gallons of pool water would require a 24-hour operation for two full weeks.
- During the RO process a total of 73,200 gallons (20%) of the water would be sent to waste. This is roughly the equivalent amount of water in most private athletic club swimming pools.

We are continuing to monitor the situation, and will strategically make changes as we attempt to resolve the problem. Draining the pool water is the final option, and would not be considered until the City's recycled water plant becomes operational in November or December.

Please continue to report your positive and negative experiences to the lifeguard staff at Los Baños.

Respectfully,

Rich Hanna

Recreation Manager

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