

## **Why is there a Benefit Assessment item on my tax bill?**

In 1980 the voters of Santa Barbara County, by a 2 to 1 majority, authorized the District to levy an assessment on each parcel in the County for the purpose of financing flood control services performed by the Santa Barbara County Flood Control and Water Conservation District. The Benefit Assessment shows up on the yearly Secured Tax Statement under "Fixed Charges".

## **How is the amount of the Benefit Assessment determined?**

The assessment is proportional to the benefits received and is determined on the basis of the proportionate stormwater runoff from each parcel. The factors affecting stormwater runoff are:

1. Size: Larger parcels contribute more runoff than smaller ones with the same land surface characteristics.
2. Land Use: Parcels with a greater degree of development (impervious surfaces such as: roofs, driveways, storage or parking areas, etc.) would contribute more runoff than a parcel of the same size with less development.

## **What if the Benefit Assessment charge seems incorrect ( too high or too low)?**

This can happen when the Land Use Code does not accurately reflect the actual stormwater runoff potential or assessment. These parcels typically fall into two categories:

- Parcels for which the land use has changed significantly, but the Land Use Code has not yet been changed.
- Parcels that cannot be characterized by a single land use code due to having several different land surfaces (e.g. roofs, parking, orchards, dry pasture).

In these instances, the District calculates the assessment using the best available data, such as aerial photographs and topography maps. The assessment is then manually calculated in a manner consistent with the intent of the program (i.e. assessment proportional to amount of potential stormwater runoff).