

Finding uses for gray water

By Susan Carpenter, Los Angeles Times

About 50 percent of the water used inside U.S. homes can be reused to irrigate landscapes and flush toilets, according to a greywater report released by the Oakland-based Pacific Institute last week. The Overview of Greywater Reuse examined the application of greywater systems worldwide to determine how the wastewater generated from sinks, baths, showers and clothes washers could be reused to reduce demand for more costly, high-quality drinking water.



“In California, there are a lot of reasons why we’re looking for new and innovative water sources, including the legal restrictions that are coming to bear on our ability to move water around the state,” said Juliet Christian-Smith, senior research associate at the Oakland-based research institute.

“Climactic changes are occurring... We are looking at a future with less of a natural reservoir in our snow in the Sierras and less water available from the Colorado River system.”

In 2009, California modified its plumbing code to allow the reuse of certain types of gray water. The Pacific Institute was interested in examining how that change might affect the state and aid its development of a “soft path of water management.”

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