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# SONOMA VALLEY COUNTY SANITATION DISTRICT

## Sewer Lateral Inspections Help Prevent Pollution

This year the Sonoma Valley County Sanitation District (District) continued inspecting private sewer laterals of properties that are 30 years or older.

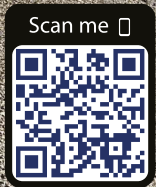
It's important to have sewer laterals inspected and repaired, if necessary, in order to prevent sewer overflows that contribute to pollution and result in costly fines to the District.

Sewer laterals are the pipes that lead from homes or businesses to the sewer main. Leaking private building laterals are often one of the main sources of inflow and infiltration, commonly referred to as "I&I," that is treated by the District at its treatment facility.

In 2021 close to 1,000 inspections of lower laterals were completed using the National Association of Sewer Service Companies (NASSCO) Lateral Assessment Certification Program (LACP).

The next phase of inspections will be smoke testing. Smoke testing is the process of blowing smoke into a manhole in the street and through the sewer pipes under a slight pressure to help find cracks in the pipes, as well as unpermitted connections to roof gutters and yard drains. Residents are notified in advance of testing and can contact us with questions. Property owners receive the results from sewer lateral inspections and are notified if repairs are needed.

To view a video of the smoke testing process, scan the QR code on the right or visit [www.sonomawater.org/smoketesting](http://www.sonomawater.org/smoketesting).



# About Your District

In 1995 Sonoma Water assumed responsibility from the County of Sonoma for managing the county sanitation zones and districts, including your District. The District began operation in 1953. Currently, it serves 17,757 Equivalent Single-Family Dwellings within a 4,500-acre service area.

The treatment plant has a design capacity of 3 million gallons per day (average daily dry weather flow) and treats wastewater to tertiary treatment levels (also referred to as advanced water treatment).

High-quality recycled water is an important resource and its use offsets potable water demands and enhances the environment. The recycled water is used for irrigation and wetland/salt marsh enhancement and can be discharged into Schell Slough or Hudeman Slough under specific operating conditions.

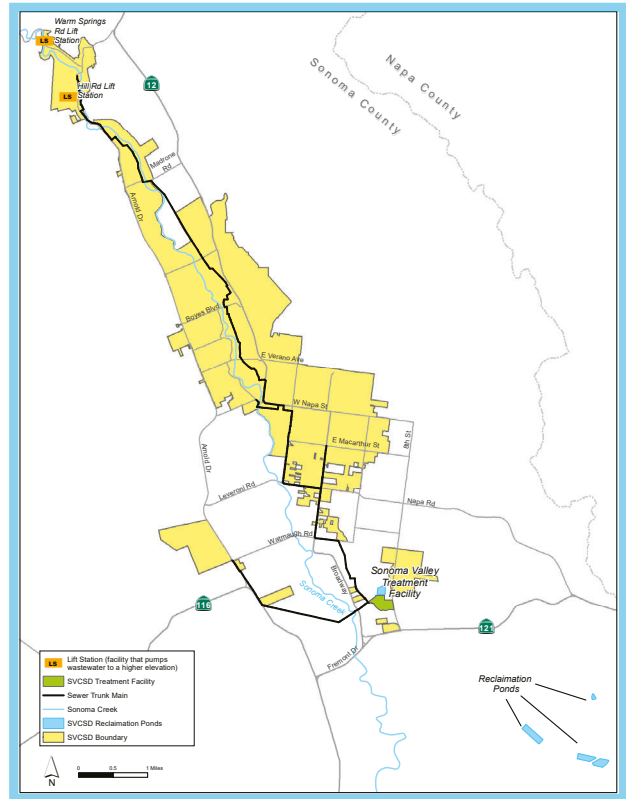
## Fats, Oils, and Grease (F.O.G.s) Cause Clogs

Wipes can catch on tree roots and accumulate with fats, oils and grease becoming large obstructions in the pipes. Further down the line, they weave together and create giant rags which get stuck in pumps, collection systems, and motors, causing backups and equipment failures.

We are asking residents not to discard wipes in the toilet, but instead to throw them in the trash to avoid backups and overflow. Protect your sewer pipes by disposing of fats, oils, and grease in the trash, not down the drain.



For More information, please visit: [www.sonomawater.org/pollutionprevention](http://www.sonomawater.org/pollutionprevention).



## Virtual Tours Spring 2022

Sonoma Water is pleased to invite community members to enjoy a free virtual tour of a sanitation district. Go to [www.sonomawater.org/sanitation-districts-and-zones](http://www.sonomawater.org/sanitation-districts-and-zones) or scan the QR code to take a tour.



At this time, no in-person public tours are scheduled due to COVID-19. Please visit our web page to stay up to date with the latest offerings, [www.sonomawater.org/tours](http://www.sonomawater.org/tours). You can also sign up for Sonoma Water's E-News to learn about current projects and future events.

## Water Rebates In Your District

### Water Saving Rebate Programs Available:

If you are a City of Sonoma or Valley of the Moon Water District customer, you have some water saving tools at your fingertips! Please take advantage of the following water saving programs which are offered on a first-come, first-served basis while funding is available.

**Clothes Washers:** Receive up to \$50 back on the purchase and installation of a new, qualifying high-efficiency clothes washer (HEW). Rebates are available for all CEE Tier 2 & Advanced Tier listed clothes washers except those containing silver ion technology.

For more information, go to [www.savingwaterpartnership.org/programs\\_list/washer-rebate/](http://www.savingwaterpartnership.org/programs_list/washer-rebate/).

# Maintaining and Repairing Aging Infrastructure

Sonoma Water has managed eight wastewater districts and zones throughout Sonoma County since 1995 when it took over management and operations from the Sonoma County Public Works Department. The districts and zones range in age from 70-plus years (Sonoma Valley, Occidental) to 40 years (Russian River, Airport/Larkfield/Wikiup) and they all face financial challenges. Given the facilities life span, the aging infrastructure of collection and treatment systems require ongoing replacement and maintenance projects.

Each of the districts and zones face more stringent water quality regulations, which increases operational and capital costs. Most of the districts and zones are relatively small and that means a smaller ratepayer base is responsible for these increasing costs.

This year the proposed rate increases for many of the districts and zones are larger than they have been in recent years. Sonoma Water recognizes the rate increases can present a financial hardship for ratepayers, and every effort is being made to seek out grants and loans to offset some of the costs for capital projects. Rate increases are needed for the maintenance and replacement of aging infrastructure, deferred maintenance in some cases, and an effort to maintain the integrity of these publicly owned assets and responsibly manage the systems in a way that protects public health and the environment.

The information below details the proposed rate increase for your district or zone and a breakdown of how funds are collected and how they are spent. There is also a list of projects planned for the coming year.

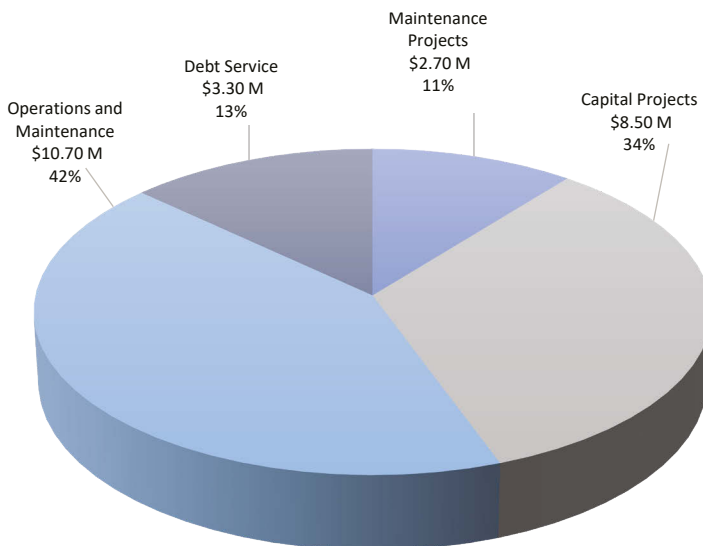
	FY21-22	FY22-23 Proposed
ESDs*	17,757	17,791
Annual Rate Per ESD (Average)	\$1,132	\$1,200
Annual Increase	\$38	\$68
Monthly Rate per ESD	\$94.33	\$100.00
Monthly Increase	\$3.17	\$5.67
Rate Increase	3.5%	6.0%
Increased Revenue	\$674,800	\$1,209,800

\*Fixed Rate sewer bills are calculated based on usage of an Equivalent Standard Dwelling ("ESD"). An ESD is defined as what an average single family home would use in a given year.

## Budget Approval

After the proposed budgets and rates are developed, the budgets are available for public review at the end of March. The draft proposed budgets for all sanitation districts and zones will be available for review at Sonoma Water's office located at 404 Aviation Boulevard, Santa Rosa, California 95403, and on Sonoma Water's website at [sonomawater.org/currentbudget](http://sonomawater.org/currentbudget). In addition, notices of the proposed rates are mailed to the owners of the properties in the districts and zones at that time. The public can protest rate increases up to the date of the rate hearings, which this year are scheduled for May 17 at the Board of Supervisors chambers. (A protest form and rate hearing information are available on pages 5-7 of this notice).

## FY 22-23 Budgeted Expenditures - \$25.2 Million



### Capital Projects - \$8.5 M

- Chase St. Bridge Sewer Replacement
- Treatment Plant Clarifiers Seismic Retrofit Construction
- Treatment Plant Headworks Rehabilitation Construction
- Treatment Plant Pumping and Piping Upgrades Design
- Trunk Main Replacement Phase 4C Construction
- Trunk Main Replacement Phases 5A & 5B Design
- Trunk Main Seismic Hazard Mitigation at Hooker Creek Design

### Maintenance Projects - \$2.7 M

- Master Plan Development
- Piping, Manhole, and Lateral Repair and Replacement
- Recoat Treatment Plant Basins
- Regulatory Permitting and Hazardous Materials Assistance
- Root Control Maintenance in Collection System
- SCADA Data and Communication Systems Improvements
- Sonoma Creek Bank Repair at Kohler Creek

# PROPOSITION 218

## Sonoma Valley County Sanitation District

### Notice of Public Hearing Regarding Proposed Sewer Service Rate Increase

#### Date, Time, and Place of Public Hearing

On **May 17, 2022 at 2:30 p.m.** or as soon thereafter as the matter may be heard, the Board of Directors (Board) of the Sonoma Valley County Sanitation District (District) will conduct a public hearing to consider increasing the annual sewer service charge (Sewer Charge) and make rate structure modifications. If approved, the increased Sewer Charge will become effective on July 1, 2022.

**Please note:** The public hearing will be held in the Board Meeting Room, 575 Administration Drive, Room 102A, Santa Rosa, California. However, it may be held virtually if required by COVID-19 pandemic conditions. If the meeting is held virtually, then information regarding public online participation will be available on the Board's agenda 72 hours prior to the meeting at <https://sonoma-county.legistar.com/calendar.aspx>.

The Sewer Charge will be imposed on each parcel upon which is located one or more structures that are connected to the system and the Sewer Charge will be collected on the general property tax bill administered by Sonoma County. Payment of the Sewer Charge will be the responsibility of the owner of the parcel.

#### Reasons for the Sewer Service Charge and Use of the Funds Collected

The Sewer Charge is imposed to pay for the cost of providing safe and reliable sewer service to your property in conformance with legal requirements, and is necessary: (a) to finance the ongoing operation and maintenance costs of the system; (b) to pay the capital replacement program costs of the system, which provides for the long-term replacement of system facilities as they wear out; and (c) to maintain sufficient reserves.

The draft proposed budget for fiscal year 2022-23 describes the District's total annual expenses in detail and is available for review at the Sonoma Valley County Sanitation District, c/o the Sonoma County Water Agency, 404 Aviation Boulevard, Santa Rosa, California 95403, and on Sonoma Water's website at [www.sonomawater.org/current-budget](http://www.sonomawater.org/current-budget).

#### Calculation of the Sewer Rate Increase

The District has two categories of users:

**A) Non-Residential Users and Residential Users with No Public Water Connection.** This category of users has a Sewer Charge that is fixed. NOTE: Residential Users that have a Public Water Connection but have no water usage in winter months and multi-family complexes including condominiums with only one Public Water Connection for all of the units are also included in this category.

**B) Residential Users with a Public Water Connection.** This category of users has a Sewer Charge that has both a fixed charge component and a volume-based component.

The method for calculating the Sewer Charge for each category of user is described in more detail below.

#### A) Amount of Proposed Sewer Rate Increase for Non-Residential Users and Residential Users with No Public Water Connection.

Effective July 1, 2022, the District proposes to increase the charge per Equivalent Single-Family Dwelling (ESD) from \$1,132 per ESD per year to \$1,200 per ESD per year for users in this category. This represents an increase of \$68 or 6.0% compared to the current year. This increase to the ESD charge has been calculated by dividing the annual costs of providing wastewater treatment and collection service by the total estimated number of ESDs in the District.

A standard single-family home constitutes one ESD. Properties that are not single-family homes are converted to ESDs based on industry standard methods and more information about this conversion is available from the district. Parcels which have other uses (for example, apartments and commercial buildings) will be assigned a number of ESDs using standard equivalency factors which estimate the probable quantity and quality of sewage effluent normally generated by such uses in comparison to a single-family home.

The Sewer Charge for Non-Residential Users and Residential Users with No Public Water Connection is calculated as follows:

$$\text{\$1,200 per ESD} \times \text{Assigned Number of ESD's} = \text{Annual Sewer Charge}$$

## **B) Sewer Rate Increase Proposed For Residential Users With a Public Water Connection**

All residential sewer customers with a public water connection must pay a Sewer Charge with two components: a fixed charge and a volume-based charge. The Residential Users with a Public Water Connection category includes single-family dwellings, multiple-family units, apartments, and mobile home parks. A multi-family complex or condominium complex will also fall within this category if each unit in the complex has its own public water connection.

**1. Fixed Charge Component:** The fixed charge component of the Sewer Charge funds 70% of the District's costs to provide sewer services, including costs that the sewage treatment and collection system incurs regardless of increased or decreased sewage flow into the system.

Effective July 1, 2022 the District proposes to increase the fixed charge to \$840.36 per ESD per year for residential users with a public water connection. This represents an increase of \$47.56 (6.0% above the current year).

The fixed charge component of the Sewer Charge will be calculated as follows:

$$\text{\$840.36 per ESD} \times \text{Number of ESD's} = \text{Fixed Charge Component of the Sewer Charge}$$

**2. Volume-Based Component:** The volume-based component funds approximately 30% of the District's costs to provide sewer service, including costs to the sewage treatment and collection system that vary with the amount of sewage conveyed and treated. The District's volume-based component uses a customer's lowest winter water use (November – March) as the basis for the calculation. Winter water use is used because it generally provides the best available estimate of indoor water use and its impact to the district's treatment facilities because outdoor irrigation is usually minimal during the winter months.

The Volume-Based Component of the Sewer Charge has three parts, which are multiplied together:

**Winter Water Usage x Number of Billing Periods Annually from your Water District x per thousand gallon = Volume-Based Component of Sewer Charge**

Effective July 1, 2022, the District proposes to increase the volume-based component charge from \$6.42 per thousand gallons to \$6.80 per thousand gallons for residential users with a public water connection. This represents an increase of \$0.42 per thousand gallons (6.0% compared to current year). Each residential user with a sewer connection and a public water connection with winter water use greater than zero will be charged as follows:

**Total Sewer Charge (fixed charge + volumetric charge) for Residential Customers with a Public Water Connection**

**For Customers with a Valley of the Moon Water District bill:**

\$840.36 per ESD x Number of ESD's (Fixed Charge Component)  
+ \$6.80 per thousand gallons  
X Lowest Winter Water Usage in thousand gallons  
X 6 billing periods annually (Volumetric Charge Component)

**For Customers with a City of Sonoma Water District water bill:**

\$840.36 per ESD x Number of ESD's (Fixed Charge Component)  
+ \$6.80 per thousand gallons  
X Lowest Winter Water Usage in thousand gallons  
X 12 billing periods annually (Volumetric Charge Component)

## **Further Information Available Prior to the Hearing**

At the hearing, the Board will consider adoption of an ordinance which will establish the increased Sewer Charge. A copy of the ordinance is on file and available for review at the Sonoma County Water Agency, 404 Aviation Boulevard, Santa Rosa, CA 95403. In addition, the following person may be contacted at the Agency at (707) 526-5370 for further information and/or obtaining copies of the draft proposed budget for fiscal year 2022-23: Kathy Badger, Administrative Aide.

## Protest Procedure

This notice has been mailed to you because records of the Sonoma County Assessor list you as an owner of one or more parcels within the District that will be subject to the Sewer Charge while connected to the system. In the event you have sold property you may have owned within the District, please send this notice to the new owner. This document can be found in the spring newsletter online at: [www.sonomawater.org/svcscd](http://www.sonomawater.org/svcscd).

Prior to the public hearing, property owners, or tenants who are directly liable for the payment of the Sewer Charges, may submit written protests respecting the Sewer Charge. At the public hearing, the Board will consider all written protests that have been received by the prescribed deadline. In order to be considered, a written protest must be made on the attached form. Only one protest will be counted per parcel. Only protests signed by the current owner(s), or tenant(s) directly liable for paying the Sewer Charge, will be allowed and protests must be received no later than the following deadlines:

*If submitted by mail, the protest must be received (NOT postmarked) no later than 5:00 p.m. on Monday, May 16, 2022 at the mailing address on the form.*

*If hand delivered, the protest must be delivered no later than 5:00 p.m. on Monday, May 16, 2022 at the mailing address on the form.*

Sonoma Water  
404 Aviation Blvd.  
Santa Rosa, CA 95403

There is a 120-day statute of limitations for challenging any new, increased, or extended fee or charge.

**Date of this Notice: March 31, 2022**

# RATE PROTEST FORM

**NOTE: IN ORDER TO BE CONSIDERED, ANY PROTEST MUST BE ON THIS FORM**

## WRITTEN PROTEST

I am the parcel owner of the property located at the address on the back of this form, or a tenant that is directly liable for paying the Sewer Charge for the property. I am submitting this form to protest the proposed Sewer Charge increase.

Additional Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Use opposite side or attach additional sheets if needed.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Property Owner Required

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name

*Fold Here First*

Place  
Postage  
Here

Sonoma Valley County Sanitation District  
c/o Sonoma Water  
404 Aviation Blvd  
Santa Rosa, CA 95403

*Fold Here Second*

Sonoma Valley County Sanitation District  
c/o Sonoma Water  
404 Aviation Blvd.  
Santa Rosa, CA 95403

## **IMPORTANT Sewer Service Fee Notice**

(Prop 218) enclosed for  
Sonoma Valley County  
Sanitation District



### **HEARING DATE**

May 17, 2022 at 2:30 p.m.

### **HEARING DETAILS**

Hearing details can be found  
72 hours prior to the meeting at  
<https://sonoma-county.legistar.com/calendar.aspx>

## **ATTENTION IMPORTANT SEWER RATE INFORMATION INSIDE**



## Included In This Issue

Proposition 218 Notice for proposed  
Fiscal Year 2022-2023 sewer rates.

The Notice with information about the proposed rates  
is included on pages 5-6 of this newsletter.  
The return protest form is located on page 7.



**Sonoma  
Water**

Clean. Reliable. Essential. Every day.

[www.sonomawater.org/SVCSD](http://www.sonomawater.org/SVCSD)