



**Sonoma
Water**

SPRING 2026 NEWS

Vol. 14, Issue #1

Russian River County Sanitation District

INSIDE

- 2 Sanitation Rate Relief Program and Rebates
- 3 Budgets and Sewer Service Charges
- 5 Prop. 218
- 7 Rate Protest Form

Thanks to the customers of the Russian River County Sanitation District for their help in reducing usage of the sewer collection system and thereby reducing the impacts of the spill at the treatment plant in early January. The district responded to the wastewater spill that began Jan. 6 when heavy rainfall and floodwaters from a storm entered the collection system, overwhelmed the facility and caused it to exceed capacity, resulting in a discharge of untreated wastewater into the Russian River. Staff worked to immediately assess the situation and notify customers. By Jan. 8, as river levels receded the spill stopped, and on Jan. 9, water quality sampling results allowed health officials to lift advisories at three coastal beaches downriver from the spill, with additional results leading to all remaining advisories being lifted on Jan. 12. The district will continue working with the Lower Russian River Municipal Advisory Council to engage our community on an action report. A community town hall with the advisory council will take place in fall 2026 to discuss this matter further. For more information visit SonomaWater.org/rccsd.

West County study reviews future wastewater needs for the lower Russian River

Sonoma Water's West County Water Quality and Recycled Water Supply Feasibility Study is helping outline long-term options for wastewater services in western Sonoma County. A major part of the study focuses on how extending service to unserved parcels, new regulations, and changing weather patterns may affect wastewater treatment and collection needs in the lower Russian River area.

A technical engineering review identifies several potential opportunities for the district's facilities. The study looks at how the treatment plant might handle higher flows for certain project alternatives. The plant's proximity to the unsewered communities of Monte Rio and Villa Grande could also make it a practical connection point if those areas move forward with sewer service, and some nearby unsewered parcels may also be candidates for future service.

The review also highlights several challenges. Parts of the collection system flood during major storms when the river rises and addressing this would require significant upgrades. Portions of the treatment plant will need repair or replacement, and there is limited room for expanded storage of water. The plant's distance from other west county sewer systems also limits opportunities for larger regional consolidation. These findings could help guide long-term planning and investment decisions for the lower Russian River area.

Protecting the existing system remains a major focus. Items like rags, wipes and fats, oils and grease continue to enter the sewer system, where they clog pumps, block pipes and make treatment less efficient. These materials should be placed in the trash, not flushed or poured down drains. Keeping them out of the system reduces emergency repairs, which in turn reduces costs and helps maintain reliable service for the community.

To learn more about the Draft Feasibility Study Report and the public stakeholder committee meetings, go to SonomaWater.org/WestCountyStudy.

Sanitation Rate Relief Program

Save money on your annual sewer service bill

The Sanitation Rate Relief Program provides a discount on sewer service bills for low-income property owners within the districts and zones managed by Sonoma Water.

The discounts can reduce the annual sewage charge on your property tax bill by up to 50%. Nonprofit organizations that provide housing for low-income renters within the district or zone are eligible to participate in the program.

Sonoma Water will begin accepting applications from April 16 to July 10.

Customers must apply every year for the Sanitation Rate Relief Program.

Participants in the PG&E CARE Program must submit a copy of their most recent PG&E bill as proof of participation in the CARE Program. Eligible customers should sign up for the PG&E CARE Program as soon as possible to facilitate qualification for the Sanitation Rate Relief Program.

Learn more and apply at SonomaWater.org/SRRP.



Water Rebates in Your District

Water-Saving rebate programs available

As a sanitation customer, you have some water-saving tools at your fingertips! Please take advantage of the following water-saving programs offered on a first-come, first-served basis while funding is available.

Front Load High-Efficiency Clothes Washer Rebate: Receive up to \$125 back on the purchase and installation of a new, qualifying high-efficiency clothes washer. Rebates are available for all CEE Tier 2 & Advanced Tier listed clothes washers except those containing silver ion technology.

High-Efficiency Toilet Rebate: Get up to \$150 back on the purchase and installation of each new, qualifying high-efficiency toilet from the List of Qualifying Models.

Download rebate application forms and learn more at

SonomaWater.org/Sanitation-Rebates or call (707) 547-1918.



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

Prevent clogs and protect your plumbing!

Wipe before washing: For plates and pans with residual grease or oil, use a paper towel to wipe them clean before washing. Place the greasy paper towels, napkins, and food scraps in the compost bin.

Dispose of larger amounts responsibly: If you have more than a little oil (but less than 2 cups), let it cool, then carefully discard it in your garbage.

For More information, please visit:

SonomaWater.org/PollutionPrevention.

Maintaining and Repairing Aging Infrastructure

Since 1995, Sonoma Water has been dedicated to managing eight vital wastewater districts and zones across Sonoma County. Many of the systems have served the community for decades, ranging from 43 years in areas like Russian River to over 70 years in Sonoma Valley and Occidental. The challenge of aging systems as our collection and treatment infrastructure ages, the need for continuous maintenance and periodic replacement becomes more critical. At the same time, we must navigate increasingly strict water quality regulations, which continue to drive up both operational and capital compliance costs. Because many of the districts are small, these rising expenses are shared among a limited number of ratepayers, intensifying the financial impact on each customer.

Balancing needs and affordability while proposed rate increases for the districts are higher than in the recent past, these adjustments are essential. They allow us to:

- Maintain and replace critical aging infrastructure.
- Address deferred maintenance to prevent more costly repairs in the future.
- Protect public health and the environment through responsible system management.

Sonoma Water is sensitive to the financial strain these increases may cause. To help offset capital project costs and reduce the burden on ratepayers, we are actively pursuing grants and loans. In the sections below, you will find specific details regarding the proposed rate increase for your district or zone. We have also included a clear breakdown of how funds are collected and allocated, along with a list of planned infrastructure projects for the upcoming year.

	FY25-26	FY26-27 Proposed
ESDs	3,232	3,252
Annual Rate per ESD	\$2,486	\$2,696
Annual Increase	\$194	\$210
Monthly Rate per ESD	\$207.17	\$224.67
Monthly Increase	\$16.17	\$17.50
Rate Increase	8.5%	8.5%
Increased Revenue	\$627,008	\$682,920

*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

The draft proposed budgets for all sanitation districts and zones are available for review now at Sonoma Water’s office located at 404 Aviation Boulevard, Santa Rosa, California 95403, and on Sonoma Water’s website at SonomaWater.org/Current-Budget.

In addition, owners of the properties in districts and zones receive notice of the proposed rates in this newsletter. The public can protest rate increases up to the date of the rate hearings, which this year are scheduled for May 12, 2026 at the Board of Supervisors chambers. (A protest form and rate hearing information are available on pages 5-7 of this notice).

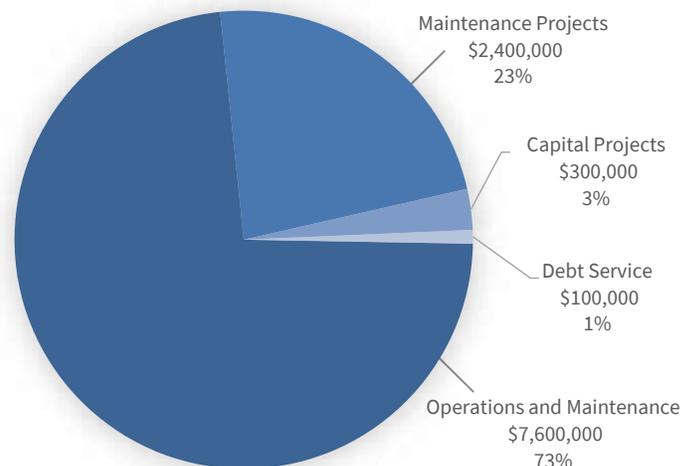
FY26-27 Budgeted Expenditures - \$10.4 Million

Maintenance Projects – \$2.4 Million

- Air Scrubber Maintenance & Electrical/Instrumentation Maintenance Services
- Biosolids Disposal Services
- Collection System Rehabilitation and Repairs
- Lif S tation Automatic Transfer Switch Build
- Main Lif S tation Pump Control Replacement
- Rate Study, SCADA, Sanitation Planning & Regulatory Permitting Assistance
- Recycled Water System Access Maintenance
- Non-Routine Maintenance Equipment
- RR Redwoods Property Irrigation & Storage Study
- Russian River Redwood Forest Management Services
- Sewer Collection Inflow and Infiltration Study, Development Analysis, and Model Update
- Treatment Plant Concrete/Grounds Maintenance
- Treatment Process Special Studies
- Wet Weather Sewer Hauling Services

Capital Projects – \$0.3 Million

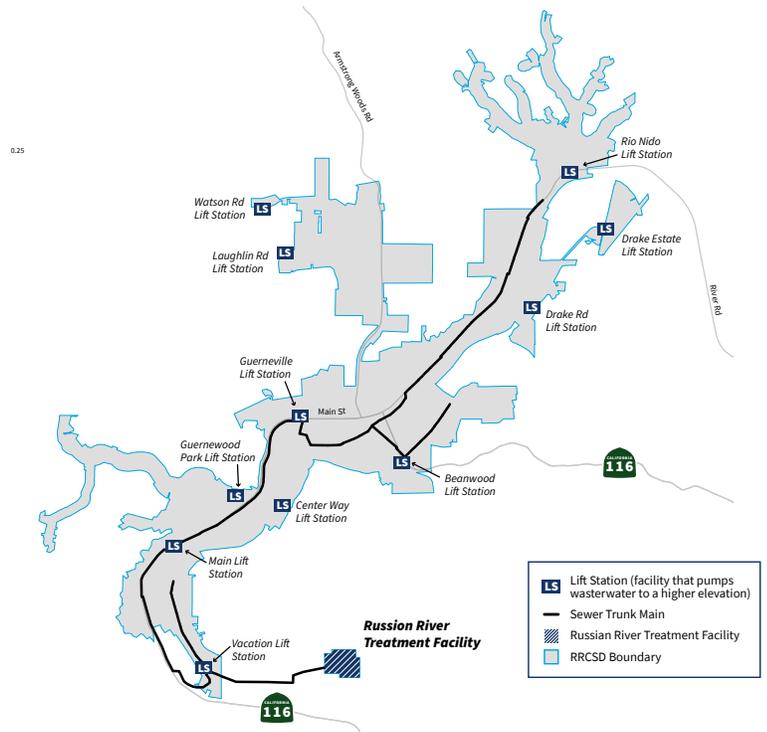
- Capacity Improvements
- Headworks, Lif S tation, and Force Main Project



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 Russian River County Sanitation District, which began operation in 1983, serves 3,232 Equivalent Single-Family Dwellings within a 2,700-acre service area.

The sanitation facility has a design capacity of 710,000 gallons per day (average daily dry weather flow) and treats wastewater to tertiary treatment levels (also referred to as advanced wastewater treatment). High-quality tertiary treated recycled water is an important source of water and its use offsets potable water demands. Between Oct. 1 and May 14, recycled water from the treatment plant is discharged into the Russian River. Between May 15 and Sept. 30, recycled water is used to irrigate the Northwood Golf Course and forests adjacent to the treatment plant.



Join a Public Tour at the Russian River County Sanitation District Treatment Plant!

May 2nd, 2026

10:00 am - 11:30 am

Scan the QR code to register



Russian River County Sanitation District Sanitary Sewer System Spill Notification Program

The Russian River County Sanitation District is offering customers a notification program designed to provide alerts during sanitary sewer system spills.

Spills may occur during heavy rain events or periods of high-water flow in the Russian River. During these events, Sonoma Water crews will respond to the incident. In cases where there are potential impacts to customers, Sonoma Water has provided a platform for communication and updates. Opting into voice calls, text messages, and/or email notifications will ensure that you receive up-to-date information about the impacts of these spills in your area.

To issue these notifications, Sonoma Water is using an alert and notification system which securely stores contact data and allows Sonoma Water staff to issue notifications to multiple contact points simultaneously. The information provided will be used only for these specific notifications.

To opt into this notification service, please add your information in this form: SonomaWater.org/RRCSD-Notification-Opt-In.

PROPOSITION 218

Russian River County Sanitation District

Notice of Public Hearing Regarding Proposed Sewer Service Rate Increase

Date, Time, and Place of Public Hearing

On May 12, 2026 at 10:05 a.m. or as soon thereafter as the matter may be heard, in the Board Meeting Room, 575 Administration Drive, Room 102A, Santa Rosa, California, the Board of Directors (Board) of the Russian River County Sanitation District (District) will conduct a public hearing to consider increasing the annual sewer service charge (Sewer Charge) to be collected on account of sewage collection and treatment services provided by the sewer system of the District to property within the District. If approved, the increased Sewer Charge and rate structure modifications will become effective on July 1, 2026.

The public hearing will be held in the Board Meeting Room, 575 Administration Drive, Room 102A, Santa Rosa, California. The Board is currently not having virtual meetings with virtual participation from the public. If a virtual meeting is required by unforeseen emergency circumstances, or if virtual participation will be implemented, information regarding virtual 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 with one or more structures that are connected to the system. 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 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.

Sewer Rate Increase

Effective July 1, 2026, the District proposes to increase the Sewer Charge to \$2,696 per year per "equivalent single-family dwelling" (ESD), an annual increase of \$210 or \$17.50 per month. A standard single-family home constitutes one ESD. Parcels with other uses (for example, apartments and commercial buildings) will be assigned a number of ESDs using standard equivalency factors that estimate the probable quantity and quality of sewage effluent normally generated by such uses in comparison to a single-family home. Additional information on this standard methodology is available from the District.

The increased Sewer Charge has been calculated by dividing the annual costs of providing wastewater treatment and collection service by the estimated number of ESDs, which results in a Sewer Charge of \$2,696 per ESD.

Each customer with a sewer connection will be charged an annual Sewer Charge calculated as follows:

$$\text{\$2,696 per ESD} \times \text{Number of ESDs}$$

The number of ESDs for your parcel is included in this newsletter in the box to the left of your mailing address.

The draft proposed budget for fiscal year 2026-27 describes the total annual expenses in detail and is available for review at the Russian River County Sanitation District, c/o the Sonoma County Water Agency, 404 Aviation Boulevard, Santa Rosa, California 95403, and on Sonoma Water's website at <https://www.sonomawater.org/current-budget>. Also available at this location is the 2026 Written Basis of Sewer Service Charge.

Further Information Available Prior to the Hearing

At the hearing, the Board will consider adoption of an ordinance that will establish the increased Sewer Charge. A copy of the ordinance will be on file and available for review at the Sonoma County Water Agency, 404 Aviation Boulevard, Santa Rosa, CA 95403. In addition, please contact Sonoma Water at (707) 521-6215 for further information and/or to obtain copies of the draft proposed budget for fiscal year 2026-27, and the written basis for the sewer rates.

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: <https://www.sonomawater.org/rrcsd>.

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 the protest 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 11, 2026 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 11, 2026 at the mailing address on the form.

Sonoma Water
404 Aviation Blvd.
Santa Rosa, CA 95403

Procedure for Legal Objections

In addition to a protest, you may submit a substantive objection stating grounds why the fee is not in compliance with applicable law. All such objections must be received (not postmarked) at the address above by April 21, 2026. A failure to object in writing by this deadline bars any right to challenge the fee in a legal proceeding.

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

Date of this Notice: March 6, 2026

RATE PROTEST FORM

NOTE: IN ORDER TO BE CONSIDERED, ANY PROTEST OR OBJECTION MUST USE 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.

If, in addition to your protest, you have a substantive objection, attach it to this form and use the heading **Objection**.

Signature of Property Owner Required

Print Name

Fold Here First

Place
Postage
Here

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

Fold Here Second

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



IMPORTANT

Sewer Service Fee Notice

(Prop. 218) enclosed for
Russian River County
Sanitation District

HEARING DATE

May 12, 2026 at 10:05 a.m.

HEARING DETAILS

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



Included In This Issue

Proposition 218 Notice for proposed Fiscal Year 2026-2027 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.



Importante

Aviso De Tarifa De Servicio De Aguas Negras
Aviso de la Proposición 218 respecto a las tarifas
propuestas para el año fiscal 2026-2027.

FECHA DE LA AUDIENCIA

12 de mayo de 2026 a las 10:05 a.m.

DETALLES DE LA AUDIENCIA

Los detalles de la audiencia estarán disponibles 72 horas
antes de la reunión en

<https://sonoma-county.legistar.com/calendar.aspx>

Incluido en esta Edición

El aviso con información sobre las tarifas propuestas se
incluye en las páginas 5-6 de este boletín. El formulario de
protesta se encuentra en la página 7.

Este boletín y otros materiales sobre saneamiento de
aguas negras están disponibles en español en

SonomaWater.org/espanol.



**Sonoma
Water**

Clean. Reliable. Essential. Every Day.

SonomaWater.org/RRCS