



**Sonoma  
Water**

**SPRING 2025 NEWS**

Vol. 13, Issue #1

# Occidental County Sanitation District

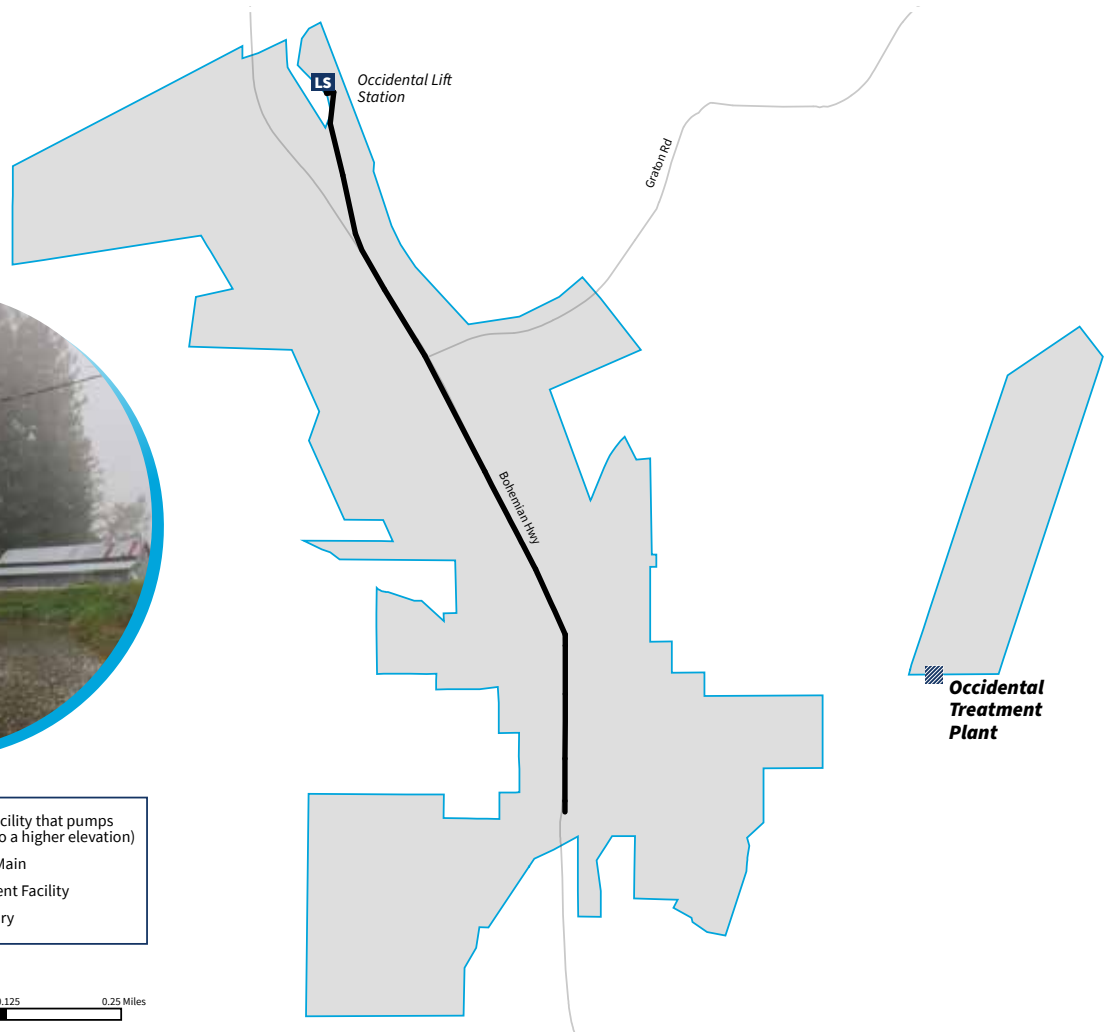
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## About Your District

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 operations in 1950. Currently, it serves 273 Equivalent Single-Family Dwellings within a 55-acre service area. The sanitation facility trucks all wastewater to the Airport-Larkfield-Wikiup Treatment Plant for treatment and recycling.



**LS** Li<sub>1</sub> Station (facility that pumps wastewater to a higher elevation)  
 — Sewer Trunk Main  
 ▨ OCSD Treatment Facility  
 □ OCSD Boundary

0 0.125 0.25 Miles

# 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](https://SonomaWater.org/SRRP).



**SANITATION RATE RELIEF PROGRAM**

Low-income homeowners and non-profit organizations that provide housing to low-income renters may apply for a discount on sewer service charges on property tax bills.

2025 program applications are due **July 10**.

Learn more and apply:  
[sonomawater.org/srrp](https://sonomawater.org/srrp)

**Sonoma Water**

# Water Rebates in Your District

## Water-Saving rebate programs available

If you are a City of Santa Rosa Water 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.

### Receive Rebates For

High-Efficiency Toilets, High-Efficiency Clothes Washers, Cash for Grass Program, Irrigation Upgrades, Graywater Reuse, Rainwater Harvesting, Sustained Water Reduction, and much more.

### For more information

Visit: <https://www.srcity.org/834/Rebates-Services> E-mail: [wue@srcity.org](mailto:wue@srcity.org) Call: 707-543-3985



# 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](https://SonomaWater.org/PollutionPrevention).

# Maintaining and Repairing Aging Infrastructure

Sonoma Water has been managing eight wastewater districts and zones across Sonoma County since 1995, when it assumed responsibility from the Sonoma County Public Works Department. These districts and zones vary in age, from over 70 years old (Sonoma Valley, Occidental) to 42 years old (Russian River, Airport/Larkfield/Wikiup), and all face significant financial challenges. Aging collection and treatment systems require continuous maintenance and periodic replacement projects.

As water quality regulations grow stricter, the costs of compliance—both operational and capital—continue to rise. Many of these districts and zones are small, with relatively few ratepayers to share the increasing financial burden.

This year, proposed rate increases for several districts and zones are higher than in recent years. Sonoma Water understands that rate increases can create financial strain for ratepayers and is actively pursuing grants and loans to help offset some capital project costs. These increases are essential to maintain and replace aging infrastructure, address deferred maintenance in some areas, and ensure these public assets remain in good condition. By responsibly managing the systems, Sonoma Water seeks to protect public health and the environment.

Below, you'll find details about the proposed rate increase for your district or zone, including a breakdown of how funds are collected and allocated. A list of planned projects for the upcoming year is also provided.

	FY24-25	FY25-26 Proposed
ESDs	273	273
Annual Rate per ESD	\$3,006	\$3,146
Annual Increase	\$140	\$140
Monthly Rate per ESD	\$250.50	\$262.17
Monthly Increase	\$11.67	\$11.67
Rate Increase	4.9%	4.7%
Increased Revenue	\$38,220	\$38,220

\*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](https://www.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 13, 2025 at the Board of Supervisors chambers. (A protest form and rate hearing information are available on pages 5-7 of this notice).

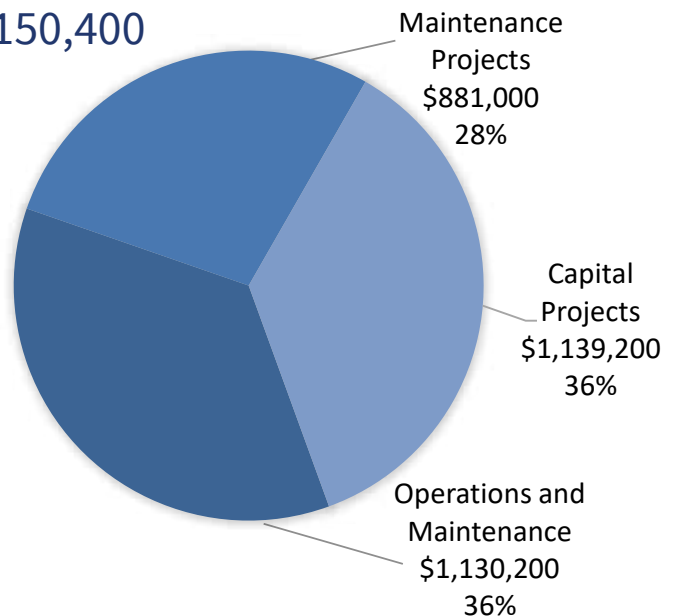
## FY 2025-2026 Budgeted Expenditures \$3,150,400

### Capital Projects – \$1,139,200

- Occidental - Graton Pipeline Design and Right of Way

### Maintenance Projects – \$881,000

- Arc Flash Studies
- Collection System Inspection, Rehabilitation, and Repairs, and Smart lid manhole monitoring
- Lift Station Automation Planning
- Pond Treatment
- Rate Study
- Sanitation Code & Standards Update
- Spill and Emergency Response Plan and Sewer System Management Plan
- System Evaluation and Capacity Assurance Plan (SECAP) Analysis



## West County Sanitation

As a result of sewer discharges that occurred during large storms in 2019, the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board issued an order requiring the Russian River County Sanitation District to conduct a feasibility study of West County sanitation options. A major component of the West County Water Quality and Recycled Water Supply Feasibility Study with Stakeholder Committee Project (project) is the formation of a stakeholder committee to better understand community issues and concerns associated with waste management and treatment in western Sonoma County.

One approach that has been discussed to address these issues is the concept of “regionalization.” Regionalization could include things like connections between smaller systems (such as the Occidental County Sanitation District to Graton Community Service District Wastewater Transfer Pipeline) or consolidation of multiple smaller systems to create a larger customer base. This could create greater efficiency and lead to more standardized wastewater treatment throughout the project area.

To learn more about the project and the public Stakeholder Committee meetings, go to [SonomaWater.org/WestCountyStudy](https://SonomaWater.org/WestCountyStudy).

## Occidental County Sanitation District - Graton Sewer Transfer Pipeline

Occidental County Sanitation District (OCSD) and Graton Community Services District (Graton) both have sewer service charges which are among the highest rates in California due to the cost associated with operating a small wastewater systems in areas with stringent wastewater treatment requirements. OCSD is currently hauling wastewater from an Occidental lift station to the Airport/Larkfield/Wikiup Sanitation Zone (ALWSZ) treatment plant for treatment and disposal in north Santa Rosa.

Currently OCSD and Graton are conducting a feasibility study to assess transporting untreated wastewater from OCSD to Graton for treatment and disposal, to assess the capacity of the Graton wastewater treatment plant to treat and dispose of the total combined flow, and to construct a pipeline from OCSD to Graton to reduce costs and provide Graton with additional income necessary to prevent significant rate increases in the near future.

Learn more at [SonomaWater.org/OCSDPipeline](https://SonomaWater.org/OCSDPipeline).



# PROPOSITION 218

## Occidental County Sanitation District

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

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

On **May 13, 2025 at 10:05 a.m.** or as soon thereafter as the matter may be heard, the Board of Directors (Board) of the Occidental 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, 2025.

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, 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, 2025, the District proposes to increase the Sewer Charge to \$3,146 per year per "equivalent single-family dwelling" (ESD), an annual increase of \$140 or \$11.67 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 \$3,146 per ESD.

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

$$\text{\$3,146 per ESD} \times \text{Number of ESDs}$$

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 2025-26 describes the total annual expenses in detail and is available for review at the Occidental 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>.

### **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 2025-26, 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/ocsd>.

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 12, 2025 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 12, 2025 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 22, 2025. **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 7, 2025**

# 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

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

*Fold Here Second*

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



## IMPORTANT

### Sewer Service Fee Notice

(Prop. 218) enclosed for  
Occidental County  
Sanitation District

### HEARING DATE

May 13, 2025 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 2025-2026 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 2025-2026.

### FECHA DE LA AUDIENCIA

13 de mayo de 2025 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](https://SonomaWater.org/espanol).



**Sonoma  
Water**

Clean. Reliable. Essential. Every day.  
[SonomaWater.org/OCSD](https://SonomaWater.org/OCSD)