



**Sonoma
Water**

SPRING 2025 NEWS

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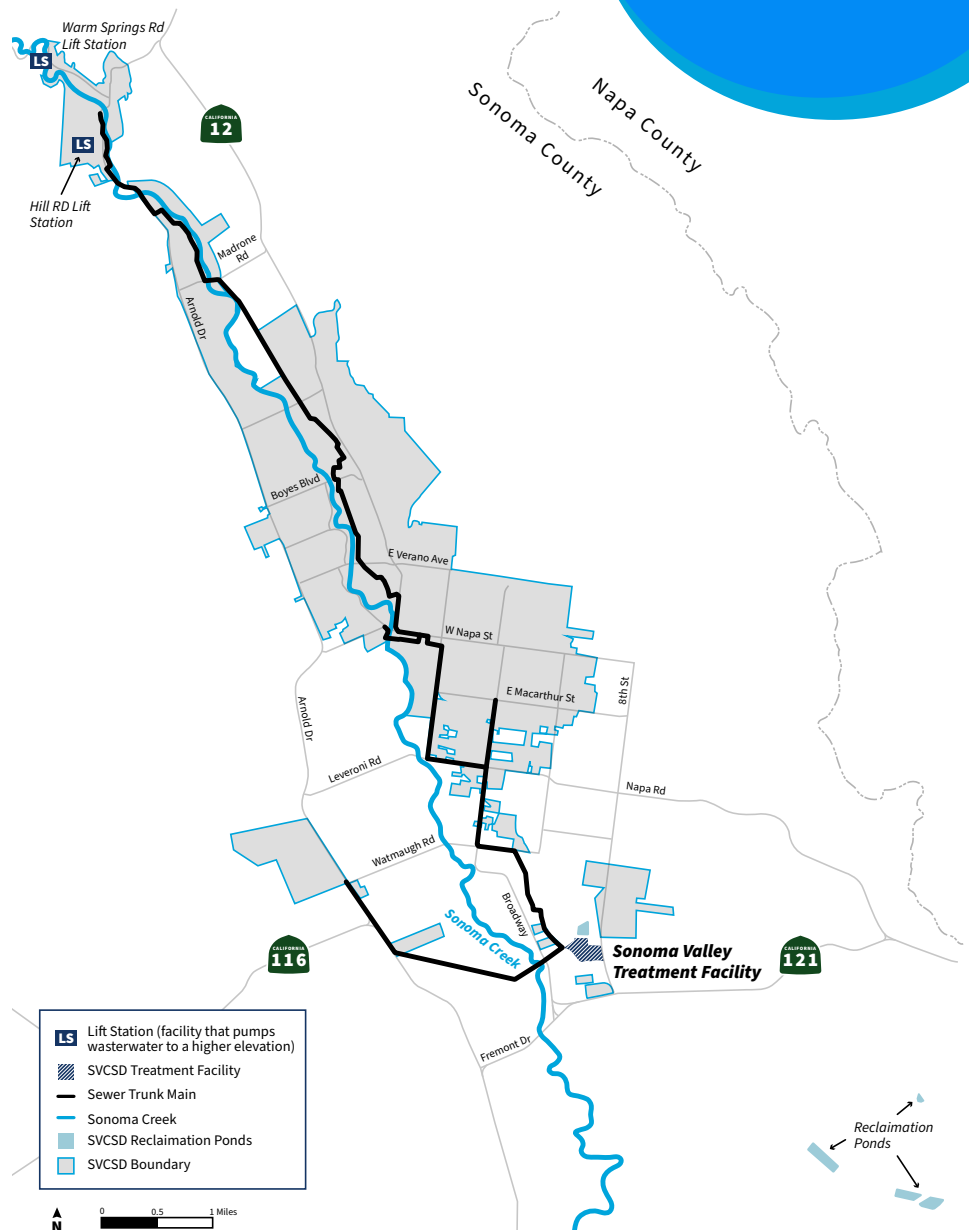
Sonoma Valley County Sanitation District

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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 operation in 1953. Currently, it serves 17,927 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.



Sanitation Rate Relief Program

Save money on your annual sewage 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 – July 10, upon approval by our Board of Directors.

Customers must apply every year for the SRRP. 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. Enrollment in CARE may help verify eligibility for this discount and make qualifying easier and faster.

Learn more and apply at 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

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 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.

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	17,820	17,927
Annual Rate per ESD	\$1,348	\$1,428
Annual Increase	\$76	\$80
Monthly Rate per ESD	\$112.33	\$119.00
Monthly Increase	\$6.33	\$6.67
Rate Increase	6.0%	6.0%
Increased Revenue	\$1,354,320	\$1,434,160

*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.

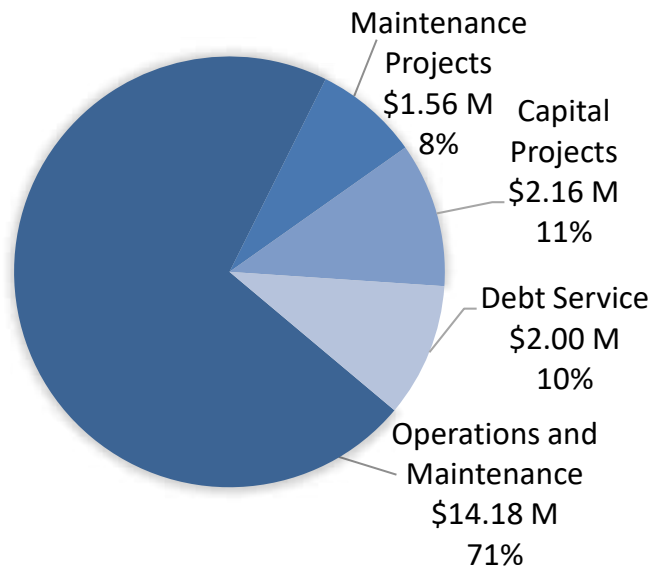
In addition, owners of the properties in districts and zones receive notice of the proposed rates in this newsletter. The public can protest rate increases up to the date of the rate hearings, which this year are scheduled for May 13, 2025 at the Board of Supervisors chambers. (A protest form and rate hearing information are available on pages 4-7 of this notice).

Capital Projects – \$2.16 Million FY 2025-2026 Budgeted Expenditures \$19.90 Million

- Management Unit Restoration
- Sewer Dedication and Easement Agreements
- Treatment Plant Pumping and Piping Upgrades Project
- Trunk Main Replacement Phases 5A & 5B Design
- Trunk Main Seismic Hazard Mitigation at Hooker Creek Design

Maintenance Projects – \$1.56 Million

- Arc Flash Studies
- Collection System Inspection, Rehabilitation and Repairs, and Smart lid manhole monitoring
- Rate Studies
- Re-coat Aeration, Chlorine Contact, & Grit Basins
- Sanitation Code & Standards Update
- SCADA Data and Communication Systems Improvements
- Spill and Emergency Response Plan Update
- Sonoma Creek Bank Repair - Kohler Creek
- Treatment Facility Roof Replacement



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 13, 2025 at 10:05 a.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, 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 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 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 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 <https://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, 2025, the District proposes to increase the charge per Equivalent Single-Family Dwelling (ESD) to \$1,428 per ESD per year for users in this category. This represents an annual increase of \$80 or \$6.67 per month. 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:

$$\text{\$1,428 per ESD} \times \text{Assigned Number of ESD's} = \text{Annual Sewer Charge}$$

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 approximately 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, 2025 the District proposes to increase the fixed charge to \$996.90 per ESD per year for residential users with a public water connection. This represents an annual increase of \$53.06 or \$4.43 per month.

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

$$\text{\$996.90 per ESD} \times \text{Number of ESD's} = \text{Fixed Charge Component of the Sewer Charge}$$

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 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:

$$\text{Winter Water Usage} \times \text{Number of Billing Periods Annually from your Water District} \times \text{per thousand gallon} = \text{Volume-Based Component of Sewer Charge}$$

Effective July 1, 2025, the District proposes to increase the volume-based component charge to \$8.08 per thousand gallons for residential users with a public water connection. This represents an increase of \$0.46 per thousand gallons. 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:

$$\begin{aligned} &\text{\$996.90 per ESD} \times \text{Number of ESD's (Fixed Charge Component)} + \\ &\text{\$8.08 per thousand gallons} \times \text{Lowest Winter Water Usage in thousand gallons} \\ &\times 6 \text{ to calculate annual amount (Volumetric Charge Component)} \end{aligned}$$

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

$$\begin{aligned} &\text{\$996.90 per ESD} \times \text{Number of ESD's (Fixed Charge Component)} + \\ &\text{\$8.08 per thousand gallons} \times \text{Lowest Winter Water Usage in thousand gallons} \\ &\times 12 \text{ to calculate annual amount (Volumetric Charge Component)} \end{aligned}$$

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 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/svcsd>.

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

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 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



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.



**Sonoma
Water**

Clean. Reliable. Essential. Every day.
SonomaWater.org/SVCS