



2020-2024 Rate Study Public Outreach

FAQ - Public

Santa Monica Water/Wastewater Rates - FAQ

1) Why are our rates increasing?

The proposed rate increase will support three key strategies to provide safe, reliable water and wastewater services to our City's residents and commercial customers while aiming to keep rates below the regional average. The three key strategies are: 1) invest in our future and achieve water self-sufficiency by 2023, 2) maintain a modern, reliable water and wastewater infrastructure, and 3) advance water conservation programs through rebates, public outreach, and developing of water recycling infrastructure.

2) What will the rates pay for?

The proposed rate increases will help support the City's overarching sustainability goals. Specifically, the rates will fund projects for the City to achieve water self-sufficiency, maintain high-quality and reliable water and wastewater services, and improve environmental sustainability.

3) When did our rates last increase?

The wastewater rates have not been increased for over 10 years and the water rates was last increased in January 2019.

4) When will the new rates go into effect?

A public hearing will be held for the proposed rates on January 28, 2020. If approved at the January 28, 2020 Public Hearing, the new rates will go into effect March 1, 2020.

5) How do our rates compare to other communities?

The City offers its residents and commercial customers one of the lowest water rates in the region. The City's average single-family resident water bill is currently 40% lower than the City of Beverly Hills and almost 70% lower than the City of Los Angeles.

6) Can I do anything to cut my utility bill?

Please visit <https://www.smgov.net/water> for more information on how to save water.



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7) What if I'm having trouble paying my bill?

The City currently provides low income assistance for water and wastewater rates as long as the resident qualifies under either the So Cal Gas or Southern California Edison's low-income assistance programs. Proof must be provided.

8) How do I comment on this proposed rate increase?

A public comment forum will be included as part of the Public Hearing that will be held on January 28, 2020.

9) What is the process for approving the rates? Who approves them?

The proposed rate increase follows the process outlined in Proposition 218. A public hearing will be held by the City on January 28, 2020 where the proposed rate increase will be presented to City Council. The City Council will be the ones approving the proposed rate increases.

10) Why can't the new, large developments in the City pay for the cost increases?

The intent of the rate study is to conduct a cost of service study to ensure every customer class is paying their fair share. It is illegal for one customer class to subsidize another. In addition, the City's water neutrality ordinance requires any new developments to maintain the same water consumption as before or they would have to pay a capital facility fee. The capital facility fee collected to date is being used to fund water self-sufficiency projects.

11) Why are we funding projects to increase our water supply, which may be growth inducing?

The goal of achieving water self-sufficiency is not to increase the City's water supply, but to replace imported water purchased from the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (approximately 30% of our water supply) with local water resources such as stormwater and recycled water.