



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Tuesday, Sept. 21, 2021

San Diego City Council Approves Water and Sewer Rate Increases Starting in January 2022

**PUBLIC HEARING FOLLOWS MONTHS OF COMMUNITY OUTREACH;
RATE INCREASES TO WILL HELP FUND INVESTMENTS IN PURE WATER
AND SEWER SYSTEM UPGRADES**

SAN DIEGO – An approved increase in wastewater rates will allow the City of San Diego to upgrade its sewer system, advance the Pure Water program and continue high level wastewater collection and treatment services.

Under the plan approved today by the San Diego City Council, wastewater rates will increase 5% beginning in January 2022. Additionally, there will be increases of up to 4% in both 2023 and 2024 and up to 3% in 2025.

The City Council also approved a pass-through charge from the San Diego County Water Authority to pay for an increase in the cost of imported water. Water rates are projected to increase up to 3% beginning in January 2022.

“We strive to keep costs as low possible, but we found that we could not continue improving our system and maintaining our services without raising rates,” said Shauna Lorange, Director of the City’s Public Utilities Department. “We recognize that this is not an ideal time to raise rates for many people, but the increases are necessary to maintain a high level of service for our customers.”

Last year, the Public Utilities Department (PUD) conducted a [cost-of-service study on wastewater services](#) to evaluate future revenue requirements, and the results were [reviewed by consultant hired by the City’s Office of Independent Budget Analyst](#). Wastewater rates have not been adjusted in San Diego for more than 10 years. The study looked at the projected capital costs, operating costs, debt costs and the overall financial stability of the wastewater utility through fiscal year 2025. Wastewater development capacity fees were also studied to assess the impact of new development connecting to the City’s wastewater system.

The study's findings showed that if the City's sewer rates remained unchanged, there would not be enough revenue to provide necessary wastewater and recycled water services between fiscal years 2022 and 2025. Wastewater rates, which include recycled water, were developed so that the charges proportionately recovered the projected costs to serve customers.

Prior to the Council vote, all PUD customers received a Proposition 218 notice in the mail with information about the rate increases being proposed and how residents could submit a protest during today's public hearing. Over the past few months, the City hosted several community forums so that people could ask questions of PUD staff and learn more about the proposed rate increases.

Financial assistance is available for those who qualify. San Diego residents facing financial hardship due to the COVID-19 pandemic may qualify for funding through the Housing Stability Assistance Program to cover the costs of rent, utilities and internet service. To apply, visit covidassistance.sdhc.org.

In addition, the City offers the Help to Others (H2O SD) program, a bill payment assistance option for qualified low- and fixed-income water utility customers. For details, visit the City's website at sandiego.gov/h2o.

Additional information about water and wastewater rate increases, including a customer bill calculator, is available at sandiego.gov/rate-increases.

###