



OUR FUTURE IN EVERY DRÖP

## FAQs: My Water Rates

### **Why are my water rates increasing?**

The Santa Rosa Board of Public Utilities and the Santa Rosa City Council are considering a proposed drinking water, recycled water, and sewer rate increases in the spring of 2021. If adopted, the rate increases would go into effect July 2021 and each year through 2025. Read on to learn more about the proposal and how you can participate.

### **Why is it critical that we invest in our public water system?**

When you pay your water bill each month you are not just paying for your drinking water, you are also paying for the pipes, pumps, and people that deliver that service. As a Santa Rosa Water customer, the rates and fees you pay are invested in the operation, maintenance, and rehabilitation of the City's water supply and sewer systems, as well as the treatment of wastewater. The City's water system includes nearly 1,200 miles of pipe, 23 water reservoirs, 20 water pump stations, 17 sewer lift stations, and a wastewater treatment plant.

Santa Rosa's water system delivers high-quality, locally sourced water 24/7, 365 days per year for less than a penny per gallon. The water used in homes and businesses throughout the City is then collected through the City's sewer system and is cleaned, and treated, and beneficially reused as recycled water.

### **What do the increases pay for?**

The additional funds collected over the next four years will help pay for the purchase of water and infrastructure improvements, such as: hardening infrastructure against natural disaster (i.e. wildfires and earthquakes), replacement of aging pipeline, replacement of water storage tanks to ensure seismic stability, upgrading systems used to control and monitor the treatment, production, and distribution of water, and restoring and protecting our watershed.

### **How much of an increase are we talking about?**

For the average residential customer with a 5/8-inch meter and using 7,000 gallons during the peak summer months (based on a sewer cap of 4.4 or 4,400 gallons) the total monthly bill would increase by \$2.38. Winter bills would be less of an increase based on no outdoor water use.

### **Where does my water come from?**

About 95% comes from the Russian River. The City of Santa Rosa purchases most of the City's drinking water from Sonoma Water. Sonoma Water collects naturally filtered drinking water from deep wells along the Russian River and delivers it the City through underground aqueducts (large pipes) that connect to the City of Santa Rosa's water system. The City also uses its own groundwater wells to help meet demand, especially during water during hot, dry summer months.

**Why reinvest now?**

High quality drinking water and safe collection and treatment of wastewater are crucial to public health and economic vitality. In order to maintain, repair, and improve the infrastructure that provides these critical services, Santa Rosa must continually invest in its water, wastewater, and treatment systems. Each year the Santa Rosa carefully evaluates its infrastructure, programs, and operations and sets priorities for the next fiscal year. To ensure the continued reliability of over \$5 billion worth of aging assets, Santa Rosa is facing significant and costly challenges.

**How can I participate?**

The City is holding a series of public meetings to provide additional information about the proposed increases. The City Council will also hold a public hearing. You are encouraged to attend the information meetings and public hearing. For details on upcoming meetings, visit [srcity.org/WaterRates](http://srcity.org/WaterRates)