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North Marin Water District Announces Public Meeting on Proposed West Marin Water Rate Changes

Learn more about West Marin Water Service Area rate structure changes and a revenue increase to enable critical investments in the water system.

West Marin Water customers of North Marin Water District are invited to a special West Marin Water Rate Study Workshop of the Board of Directors to be conducted via a virtual meeting on February 23, 2020, at 6:00 p.m. pursuant to Executive Order N-29-20 issued by the Governor of the State of California.

Costs continue to rise. The District has long focused on keeping customer rates low by controlling costs. For example, the Water District has reduced the number of full-time employees over the past decade, limited future pension costs, and more. These cost-saving actions help keep current West Marin water rates below the median for the West Marin Area region. Nonetheless, rising operating costs will exceed revenue in the coming years.

District must increase revenue by 6% to pay for inflationary costs and increased funding for critical upgrades to its aging infrastructure. The District's mission is to meet the expectations of our customers in providing potable water that is reliable, high-quality, environmentally responsible, and reasonably priced. Maintaining and renovating the infrastructure of the rural West Marin Water System is costly. Today the District maintains a \$9.2M system that includes 26 miles of pipeline, over 1 million gallons of finished water storage distributed across 13 tanks, 7 pump stations, 168 fire hydrants, a multitude of valves, 3 wells, and a water treatment plant, all designed to serve 783 customers. The District must increase re-investment from about \$400 thousand per year to \$800 thousand per year in order to properly maintain and upgrade the system to address critical improvements including fire protection and water quality improvements.

Rate structure changes. The District conducted an extensive cost-of-service study of every aspect of the District's service, including water supply, treatment, delivery, facility replacement/upgrades, and daily operations. The study found changes in the proportion of costs required to serve each customer class (residential and commercial) caused by changes in customer water use, state regulations, service costs, and other factors. As a result, the District is proposing changes to the rate structure to ensure that each class of customer continues to pay their fair and proportional share of costs.

Individual water bill changes will vary. Customer bills will be recalculated based on the actual cost of serving each customer class as determined in the cost of service study. As a result, individual customer bill changes may be more or less than the overall 6% rate increase. Monthly bills for single family accounts in the Base Zone (the lowest elevation) may increase by as much as 2% or decrease by as much as 3%, depending on water usage. Accounts in Zone 2 are expected to experience increases over 10% due to adjustments to the hydraulic zone surcharge.

Your input is important. The Board of Directors will review the proposed rate changes on February 23, 2021 at a Special Virtual Board meeting and West Marin Water Rate Study workshop. Before the changes are approved, there will be several more public board meetings and a notice will be mailed to every property owner with more details. Public input is welcome throughout the process.

For more information. West Marin water customers interested in learning more, asking questions, and providing input can participate in the meetings described above, or contact the District via website (nmwd.com), email info@nmwd.com, or call customer service at 415-897-4133.

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