



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SLV WATER DISTRICT PROPOSES TO FUND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS, SYSTEM UPGRADES AND REPAIRS, FACILITIES CONSOLIDATION AND WATERSHED MANAGEMENT VIA 5-YEAR RATE INCREASE PLAN

BOULDER CREEK, CA—The San Lorenzo Valley Water District today announced it is notifying customers of a proposed five-year rate increase plan to fund emergency preparedness, upgrades and repairs to the district's aging water system, and facilities consolidation. The District's water system includes 150 miles of water mains, most of which are more than 70 years old. The District serves more than 7,300 customers in the communities of Boulder Creek, Brookdale, Ben Lomond, Felton, Manana Woods, Scotts Valley and Zayante.

At its meeting September 5, 2013, the San Lorenzo Valley Water District Board voted unanimously to proceed with the provisions of Proposition 218 to notify customers of the rate increase plan and hold a hearing on the plan. A hearing is scheduled for October 24, 2013. An open house to discuss the rate plan and the projects associated with it is scheduled for October 10, 2013. Both meetings will be held at 7:00PM at the Highlands Park Senior Center, 8500 Highway 9, Ben Lomond.

Proposed Rate Increases

The typical single-family residence would receive increases of 16% in 2014, 13% in 2015, 8% in 2016, and 9% in 2017 and 2018. Currently, the typical customer's bi-monthly bill is \$90.99 or \$45.50 per month. Following the first year's increase, the typical customer's bi-monthly bill would be \$105.97, or approximately \$53.00 per month.

Emergency Preparedness

Preparing for and coping with emergencies, such as fires, mudslides and earthquakes, is a fact of life in the San Lorenzo Valley. Funds provided through the rate increase plan will support key emergency preparedness strategies including:

- Pipeline repairs and upgrades that will increase "fire flow," which are critical for firefighters.
- A comprehensive 24-hour emergency operations center, including secure fuel storage for district engineers, which is needed in order to ensure vehicles and generators remain functional during emergencies.
- Emergency interties to connect four local water systems that are currently stand-alone so that critical backup supplies are available in the event of emergencies.
- Watershed monitoring and maintenance to prevent fires and other emergency situations.

System Upgrades & Repairs

Much of the District's water system is 72 years old. Funds provided by the proposed rate increase plan will support repair and replacement of various key infrastructure elements including water storage tanks, wells, mains and distribution lines. Currently, the District's water tank inventory is 75% steel

tanks and 25% redwood tanks. The steel tanks suffer from corrosion, which if not addressed can result in tainted water or structural failure. The district's redwood tanks need to be replaced because they are leaking. Current water main and distribution line challenges include low pressure during the summer, frequent leaks and breaks (in some cases up to once per week), and insufficient fire flow available to firefighters.

Facilities Consolidation

Per Section 7.1 of the District's [Strategic Plan](#), as adopted September 5, 2013, the District "proposes to consolidate the operations of three existing facilities at one location to improve function and efficiency." Currently, the District operates from three separate locations, including administration offices on Hwy 9 in Boulder Creek (which it has occupied since 1964), the operations building across Hwy 9 from the administration offices, and the Quail Hollow storage facility. The District will lose access to the Quail Hollow facility because the property is needed by Santa Cruz County for an adjacent bridge-widening project. The administration building poses a number of safety concerns, including seismic safety, lack of structural integrity, and non-compliance with building codes and the Americans with Disabilities Act (the building is not accessible by wheelchair). In addition to addressing safety concerns, the consolidated facility would:

- Provide a 24-hour fueling station that could be utilized by fire and police for emergencies.
- Centralize operations and improve efficiency.
- Provide a much-needed community meeting room in Boulder Creek.
- Improve the District's environmental sustainability, including GhG emissions reductions by reducing frequent vehicle trips.
- Provide a safe environment for the public and SLVWD employees.
- Maintain equipment, parts and records in a single location.

Watershed and Fisheries Management

The proposed rate increase plan will help to support ongoing watershed projects to protect the environmental health of the local aquifer, fisheries and forested watersheds that supply water to the San Lorenzo Valley. This includes a major project to assess the impacts of District water diversions on endangered fisheries.

Proposition 218/Written Protests

The SLV Water District Board has adopted procedures for Proposition 218 Related Fees and Charges Proceedings, including submission and tabulation of protests in connection with rate and fee increases. Any property owner may protest the proposed water rates. If the identified parcel has more than one owner of record, only one written protest will be counted. Only written and signed protests of property owners that include the writer's address and/or assessor parcel number are to be counted to determine whether a majority protest to the proposed water rate increase exists. Written protests may be mailed or hand delivered to the San Lorenzo Valley Water District, 13060 Highway 9, Boulder Creek, CA, 95006, and must be received by the end of the public hearing to be counted.

About the San Lorenzo Valley Water District

The San Lorenzo Valley Water District is located in the mountains of northern Santa Cruz County. The district serves more than 7,300 metered connections. Established in 1941, the district supplies water to the communities of Boulder Creek, Brookdale, Ben Lomond, Zayante, Scotts Valley, Manana Woods and Felton. For more information, visit www.slvwd.com or www.facebook.com/slvwaterdistrict.

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