



PROPOSED SEWER RATE INCREASE Q&A

*Questions obtained through resident feedback received during the
Community Meetings of January 22nd and February 15th*

Why do we need to pay for it?

Although the rates have been increased previously, the current rates are not sufficient to help fund the entire Project nor did the previous increases anticipate covering funding for the entire project:

- Upgrade to the waste water treatment plant
- Brine disposal line
- Waste water treatment plant expansion.

“My CFD funds were stolen, which should have gone to fund the Project.”

- CFD funds cannot be used to fund this project
- The CFD funds were used to build infrastructure that served the housing development such as lift stations and sewer trunk lines

“The City needs to recruit non-residential users to connect to the system and mitigate the rate increase.”

- The sewer rates are based on providing cost of sewer service
- More connections to the WWTP help to keep the rates lower because some of the fixed costs can be spread over a larger number of users
- The rate study accounts for increase in connections
- Prop 218 prohibits overcharging Commercial and Industrial users to supplement residential users

“How are we supposed to keep up with these onerous fee increases when salaries are stagnant?”

- To help ease the impact of the rate adjustment, the City is proposing to increase the rate over five years rather than all at once

“It is unfair that the long-term residents subsidize new development when it is the new homes that require the need for new capacity.”

- The developers and future users pay their fair share through the Sewer Connection/Capacity Fees
- The sewer capacity fee was increased from \$3,130 to \$5,125 to make sure that the new users are paying their full impact
- The Wastewater Treatment Plant Upgrades and the Brine Pipeline Project would still need to be completed if development were to stop

“We should not be burdened with further unwarranted costs without complete exhaustion of due diligence by the City on cost effective measures to expand.”

- The City went through exhaustive studies to find the most effective measure to comply with the Basin Management Plan
- Upgrading the plant with new technology and connecting to the existing Brine Line in San Bernardino is the most cost effective solution

“The City must provide additional information on bidding (must have multiple bidders not associated with City employees).”

- The City Council has implemented new policies and procedures that require projects to be advertised for bidding and objective review of proposals
- The contracts are awarded in publically held meetings
- City employees are not allowed to bid on City Projects

“Does this need to be voted in an election?”

- No, Pursuant to California Constitution Article XIII D Section 6(c), sewer, water and refuse collection fees are expressly exempted from the requirements of being submitted to and approved by the voters at an election prior to adoption.
- Proposition 218 provides a specific process for adjusting sewer rates. Rather than being submitted to a vote at an election, sewer fee increases are approved through the Proposition 218 protest hearing process.

“The rate should be adjusted according to the number of persons living in a given residence.”

- The rates are based on an average flow coming from a household
- The only reasonable way the flows can be established is to divide all flow by the number of connections
- Unlike water systems, sewer does not have a meter to determine individual flows

“Can rate payers submit sewer increase protest letters without signing it? Does it have to be notarized or can it be hand delivered?”

- The written protest must include (at a minimum):
 - Address or parcel number of property subject to the rate increase
 - Whether the protestor is an owner or a renter
 - A clear statement protesting a particular rate
- The protest letter may be mailed or hand delivered. (No email or other electronic protests will be accepted or counted)
 - Protest letters may also be submitted at the Public Hearing

LEARN MORE

Copies of the Notice of Public Hearing, Sewer Rate Study, and Community Meeting Presentations are available on the City’s website at www.BeaumontCa.gov