



SAUSALITO-MARINCITY SANITARY DISTRICT

#1 EAST ROAD • SAUSALITO, CALIFORNIA 94965
OFFICE 415.332.0244 • PLANT 415.332.0240 • FAX 415.332.0453

General Manager
Craig Justice

Office Manager
Vacant

Directors
Dan Rheiner, *President*
William Ring, *Vice President*
Ann Arnott
Don Beers
James Delano

PRESS NOTICE: For Immediate Release

Sausalito-Marin City Sanitary District Approves New Method for Sewer Charges

Following two years of detailed financial and engineering studies, and after ten public meetings to review progress, the Sausalito-Marin City Sanitary approved a new five-year sewer rate plan on July 7, 2014. The new rates are effective July 1, 2014. The bill for most customers will appear on the annual property tax due in December, 2014.

The final, approved rates and charges result from three types of changes.

First, The District determined the amount of wastewater flow from different customer classes (single-family, multi-family, and floating home). The rate structure was changed to reflect those differences in flow. The result is that residential charges will more accurately reflect actual use of the wastewater system; customer classes that generate less wastewater will have lower bills. The non-residential customer class sewer charge formula was adjusted to reflect updated estimates of the standard flow per equivalent dwelling unit. The non-residential customer class sewer charge method was otherwise not changed since their rates already take wastewater flow into account in the same way.

Second, a small revenue increase was made. The District is in the process of investing \$46 million to improve and upgrade its aging wastewater treatment plant and collection system to address mandatory regulations. The good news is that because of effective financial planning, increases of only 2% are needed each year over the next five years to support the program.

Third, the District approved an increase in the collection system supplemental charge for its unincorporated area customers, including Marin City. The supplemental charge pays for the cost of collection system operation, maintenance and upgrades. The District approved annual charge adjustments to be phased in over the next five years from \$61 to \$78 per dwelling unit. This phased

approach will help spread out the costs to District customers. This supplemental charge is not applicable to residents within the City limits of Sausalito.

“Before raising sewer rates, the District’s Board of Directors sought out opportunities to decrease costs and increase efficiency. Keeping costs down is an ongoing priority,” stated Craig Justice, the District’s General Manager. For example, the District: completed major projects on schedule and below estimated costs; decreased employee pension and retirement cost; outsourced selected activities to less expensive private contractors; increased cross-training of employees for improved efficiency; and implemented many other cost-saving steps.

The approved annual sewer service charges for single-family customers in the District’s incorporated service area will increase from \$770 to \$866 per dwelling unit over the next five years, and multi-family from \$715 to \$771. Single-family and multi-family customers in the unincorporated areas also pay the annual collection supplemental charge described above. The District’s floating home customers are in the unincorporated area so their annual charge includes the supplemental charge. The approved annual sewer service charges for floating home customers will increase from \$708 to \$736 per dwelling unit over the next five years. The District rates are in the mid-to-upper range of both Marin County and overall Bay Area Sewer Service Charges.

“The Board put a high value on public input and we worked with interested members of the public for two full years,” noted General Manager Craig Justice. “Extensive customer input helped us create rates that are both fair and stable so the District can continue to protect public health and the environment through high quality sanitary services. We are really pleased with the overall result”.

For information, contact the District at (415) 332-0244 or at patty@smcsd.net. Or visit our website at www.smcsd.net.

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