



Vista Irrigation District
1391 Engineer Street
Vista, CA 92081-8840

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Notificación de Audiencia Pública



**Notice of Public Hearing to Consider
Proposed Adjustments to Water Rates and Service
Charges**

**9 a.m. Wednesday, November 19, 2025
Vista Irrigation District Board Room
1391 Engineer Street
Vista, CA 92081**

***Aviso de audiencia pública para considerar
los ajustes propuestos a las tarifas de agua y
los cargos por servicio***

Este aviso está disponible en español en el sitio web.



(760) 597-3100



RateStudy@vidwater.org



vidwater.org/water-rate-study/



NOTICE TO PROPERTY OWNERS AND CUSTOMERS

This Notice is being provided to you by the Vista Irrigation District (District) in accordance with Article XIII D, Section 6 of the California Constitution (Proposition 218), which requires the District to notify property owners and customers of record of proposed water rate adjustments. This notice is being provided to inform property owners and customers of the proposed changes and their right to protest and/or object to proposed adjustments to water rates and charges. This serves as notice that the District's Board of Directors will conduct a **Public Hearing to consider the proposed rate adjustments on Wednesday, November 19, 2025, at 9 a.m. or soon thereafter, in the Board Room at its Administrative Office at 1391 Engineer Street, Vista, CA 92081.**

All those interested are invited to appear at the time and place of the Public Hearing on November 19, 2025, to give oral or written testimony or to submit written protests regarding the proposed rate adjustments. The Board of Directors will hear and consider oral testimony and written materials submitted regarding proposed rate adjustments at the Public Hearing. The Board of Directors has the authority to adjust the proposed water rate changes in response to oral testimony and written materials submitted for consideration, provided any adjustments cannot increase rates beyond those proposed in this Notice.

PROPOSED EFFECTIVE DATE

If adopted, the water rates and service charges would be effective on January 1, 2026, with annual rate adjustments effective on or after each January 1 through 2030. The District bills for water services in arrears; therefore, water bills received on or after March 1, 2026, will reflect the adjusted rates for the customer's billing period (which may be monthly or bi-monthly) prior to that date.

REASONS FOR PROPOSED WATER RATE ADJUSTMENTS - The Need for Rate Adjustments to Ensure a Reliable Water System

The District must continually invest in its water system to maintain safe and reliable service. Water services are funded primarily by customer rates with every dollar collected going toward the operation, maintenance, repair and improvement of the water system. Periodic evaluations and adjustments are necessary to address infrastructure needs, inflation and regulatory mandates. Responsible financial planning and appropriate funding are essential to maintaining and improving our water system.

The District retained the services of a third-party consulting firm, Raftelis Financial Consultants, Inc., to complete a comprehensive cost of service/water rate study to make certain that revenues being collected are sufficient to only cover, and not exceed, the cost of operating, maintaining and upgrading the water system. To ensure both financial stability and continued service reliability, rate adjustments are recommended. These adjustments are necessary to address inflation and the increasing cost of purchased water, parts, and materials; to comply with stringent state and federal regulations; to fund the repair and replacement of aging water infrastructure; and to finance major capital projects, including the Pechstein Reservoir roof replacement, construction of the new Pechstein II reservoir, and replacement of the 100-year-old Vista Flume.



The Pechstein Reservoir stores treated water from the Escondido-Vista Water Treatment Plant, delivered via the Vista Flume, and serves as the main hub for distributing that water throughout the District's service area. It was constructed in the mid-1920s as an open-surface reservoir that was replaced in 1978 with the current 20-million-gallon pre-stressed concrete reservoir. Given the reservoir's age and its critical role in daily operations, several studies to assess its condition found that while the main tank structure is still in good shape, the roof needs to be replaced. Replacing the reservoir roof is a significant challenge because the reservoir supplies nearly 50 percent of the District's total water storage and cannot be taken offline for long periods. To address this, the District plans to build a new Pechstein II Reservoir to add up to 10 million gallons of additional storage. This new reservoir is essential to allow the existing reservoir to be taken offline for roof replacement, improve operational flexibility, and meet storage goals outlined in the 2018 Water Master Plan. The current total estimated cost to build the Pechstein II Reservoir, replace the roof, and complete other necessary repairs to the existing reservoir is about \$67 million.

Questions About this Notice and Proposed Rates?

INFORMATIONAL OPEN HOUSES ABOUT PROPOSED RATES

If you have questions about this Notice, proposed rates or your water service, the District is hosting two informational open houses prior to the Public Hearing on November 19, 2025. Each open house will feature a series of stations staffed by subject matter experts who will be available for one-on-one conversations. The same content will be covered in each session. Please drop in at your convenience.

Informational Open Houses Vista Irrigation District 1391 Engineer Street, Vista, CA 92081

- **Saturday, September 13
10:30 a.m. to 12 p.m.**
- **Thursday, September 18
5:30 to 7 p.m.**

The Vista Flume, originally built in the 1920s, has undergone several major upgrades to extend its lifespan and improve performance. Nearly a century later, the Flume is nearing the end of its useful life. In 2019, the District initiated a study to evaluate potential water supply alternatives and whether the Flume should be replaced or decommissioned. Numerous factors were considered including cost, reliability, water quality, environmental protection and the long-term benefits of maintaining access to our local water resources at Lake Henshaw. In April 2020, the District Board selected Flume replacement as the preferred long-term water supply strategy. The estimated cost, including planning, design, and construction, is approximately \$263 million. The District finished initial study and planning and is preparing for the next phase, which includes final design, environmental review, and construction planning.



The Flume, 1920s

The proposed rate adjustments will ensure sufficient revenue to cover operating and capital expenses, allowing the District to maintain the high-quality service customers expect. As costs for maintaining water facilities continue to rise, these adjustments are critical to sustaining a dependable water system for years to come.

PROPOSED WATER RATE AND SERVICE CHARGE INCREASES



The Water Rate Study Report is available at vidwater.org/water-rate-study and on file with the District. Scan this QR Code to be taken directly to the webpage.

The District is proposing the Service Charges (Table 1) and the Water Usage Rates (Tables 2 and 3) with annual increases over five years as identified below.

Service Charge (also known as Ready-To-Serve Charge)

Table 1. Proposed Five-Year Schedule of Monthly Water Meter Service Charges and Private Fire Service Charges by meter size, effective January 1 of each calendar year (CY) 2026 through 2030. The increase effective January 1, 2026, is based on the cost of service analysis (see Water Rate Study Report Section 1.3), and each proposed increase thereafter is 4% each year. **Voluntarily locked meters will be billed at 100% of the service charge listed below.**

Meter Size	Current	1/1/2026	1/1/2027	1/1/2028	1/1/2029	1/1/2030
5/8"	\$41.44	\$39.80	\$41.39	\$43.04	\$44.76	\$46.55
3/4"	\$54.67	\$55.94	\$58.17	\$60.50	\$62.92	\$65.43
1"	\$80.78	\$88.22	\$91.75	\$95.42	\$99.23	\$103.20
1.5"	\$146.63	\$168.91	\$175.67	\$182.69	\$190.00	\$197.60
2"	\$225.36	\$265.75	\$276.38	\$287.44	\$298.93	\$310.89
3"	\$435.40	\$523.98	\$544.94	\$566.74	\$589.41	\$612.99
4"	\$671.55	\$814.49	\$847.07	\$880.96	\$916.20	\$952.85
6"	\$1,590.38	\$1,621.47	\$1,686.33	\$1,753.79	\$1,823.94	\$1,896.89
8"	\$2,115.68	\$2,589.84	\$2,693.44	\$2,801.17	\$2,913.22	\$3,029.75
10"	\$3,165.82	\$3,719.61	\$3,868.39	\$4,023.13	\$4,184.05	\$4,351.41
Private Fire Charges						
5/8" to 3"	\$41.44	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
4"	\$41.44	\$7.74	\$8.05	\$8.37	\$8.70	\$9.05
6"	\$41.44	\$22.47	\$23.37	\$24.31	\$25.28	\$26.29
8"	\$41.44	\$47.88	\$49.80	\$51.79	\$53.86	\$56.01
10"	\$41.44	\$86.11	\$89.55	\$93.13	\$96.86	\$100.73

Water Usage Rates

Table 2. Proposed Five-Year Schedule of Water Volumetric Rates (increases/decreases) for calendar years (CY) 2026 through 2030. The volumetric rate is in dollars per unit (\$/hcf).

	Current	CY 2026	CY 2027*	CY 2028*	CY 2029*	CY 2030*
Tier 1	\$6.19	\$6.01	\$6.24	\$6.48	\$6.73	\$6.99
Tier 2	\$6.66	\$7.79	\$8.08	\$8.38	\$8.70	\$9.03
Tier 3	\$6.66	\$7.82	\$8.11	\$8.42	\$8.74	\$9.07



**1 unit = 100 cubic feet
= 748 gallons**

*Volumetric rates shown in CYs 2027 through 2030 do not include the San Diego County Water Authority pass-through increases/decreases (see explanation of pass-through charges below).

Table 3. Proposed Five-Year Schedule of Water Volumetric Rates (increases and decreases) for calendar years (CY) 2026 through 2030 **for the Permanent Special Agricultural Water Rate (PSAWR) discount program only**. Under PSAWR, the San Diego County Water Authority (SDCWA) provides a discount in exchange for an interruptible, lower level of service during times of water supply shortages or emergency water reductions. The volumetric rate is in dollars per unit (\$/hcf).

Agricultural Programs Only*	Current	CY 2026	CY 2027*	CY 2028*	CY 2029*	CY 2030*
PSAWR Domestic usage	\$6.50	\$7.10	\$7.37	\$7.65	\$7.94	\$8.24
PSAWR Discount**	(\$1.49)	(\$1.64)	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD

*Volumetric rates shown in CYs 2027 through 2030 do not include the SDCWA pass-through increases/decreases.

**The PSAWR program discount rate is calculated after rates are adopted annually by SDCWA. Customers receiving the current discount (\$1.49) pay \$5.01 per unit; customers receiving the discount in CY 2026 (\$1.64) will pay \$5.46 per unit; and PSAWR discounts for future years will be set when calculated.

Pass-through of San Diego County Water Authority Rate and Charge Increases or Decreases

Based on Government Code section 53756, the District is authorized to pass-through increases in wholesale water costs to its customers. The District purchases wholesale water from SDCWA, which includes the proportionate costs of construction and maintenance of regional storage, delivery, and treatment infrastructure necessary to ensure reliable water delivery to District customers.

SDCWA's wholesale costs for CY 2026 are incorporated in the Water Usage Rates in Tables 2 and 3 for CY 2026. The Water Usage Rates in Tables 2 and 3 for CY 2027 through CY 2030 will be subject to future increases based on a pass-through of wholesale water costs from SDCWA.

The SDCWA Infrastructure Access Charge (IAC), shown as the Emergency Storage Fee on customer bills, will not increase on January 1, 2026. Any future increases or decreases in the SDCWA IAC will be passed through to customers. For each calendar year after receiving updated wholesale costs from SDCWA, the District will provide notice to customers at least 30 days prior to the effective date of the change.

Additional details regarding proposed water rates, including the formula for this pass-through rate for CY2026, can be found in the Water Rate Study available on the website at vidwater.org/water-rate-study. Use the QR Code in this notice to go directly to the webpage.

Water Bill Calculator

A water bill calculator is available on the District's rate study website linked in this Notice. Input your monthly water usage, and the calculator will show you how the proposed adjustments will affect your monthly bill. You will need to know your billing cycle length (monthly or bi-monthly), meter size, and how much water you use during a billing cycle. It is helpful to have a prior bill available to fill in the required information. The calculator will calculate your bill using the proposed January 1, 2026, rates and charges.



Customer Service

If you need assistance in determining how the proposed changes in water rates and service charges impact your water bill, you may also contact the District's Customer Service Department at (760) 597-3120 during regular office hours, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday excluding holidays.



SUBMITTING A WRITTEN PROTEST OR WRITTEN OBJECTION

The proposed increases in water rates and service charges are considered property-related fees and charges governed by Section 6 of Article XIII D of the California Constitution, Government Code sections 53750 through 53759.2, and other applicable laws that together are commonly referred to as Proposition 218. There are multiple ways that property owners and customers subject to the proposed rates and charges as well as any other interested members of the public can participate in the Proposition 218 process.

HOW TO SUBMIT A WRITTEN PROTEST

You have the right to protest the proposed water rate and service charge adjustments. The protest **must be in writing**, and it must be submitted by either the property owner or a current rate-paying tenant. It must include the property service address and/or the assessor's parcel number, the eligible individual's name (property owner or tenant), a statement to the effect of "I protest the proposed water rate adjustments," and an original signature.

Written protests **may only be submitted by mail** to the Vista Irrigation District Board Secretary at 1391 Engineer Street, Vista, CA 92081, **or in person** at the District's Administration Office prior to or during the Public Hearing on Wednesday, November 19, 2025, at 9 a.m. in the Board Room at the Vista Irrigation District, 1391 Engineer Street, Vista, CA 92081. **All protests must be received by the Board of Directors before the conclusion of the Public Hearing.** Any protest received after the conclusion of the Public Hearing will not be accepted or considered.

Only one written protest per affected property will be counted. Telephone, e-mail, and fax protests will not be accepted. At the Public Hearing on Wednesday, November 19, 2025, the Board of Directors will accept and consider all written protests and hear all oral comments on the proposed water rate and service charge changes. Oral comments will not be counted as protests unless accompanied by a written protest as outlined in this Notice.

At the conclusion of the Public Hearing, the Board of Directors will consider adopting the proposed rates and charges as follows:

1. If the District receives timely written protests from property owners or customers representing fewer than a majority of the properties served by the District, the Board of Directors will consider adjusting water rates and service charges as proposed.
2. If the District receives timely written protests from property owners or customers representing a majority (50% +1) of the properties served by the District, the District is prohibited by law from changing its water rates and service charges at this time.

If adopted, the proposed water rates and charges will take effect beginning January 1, 2026. Reasons for the rate adjustments, the basis upon which they were calculated, and the amount of the proposed water rates are described in more detail in the Water Rate Study Report at vidwater.org/water-rate-study.

EXHAUSTION OF ADMINISTRATIVE REMEDIES - HOW TO SUBMIT A WRITTEN OBJECTION

Notice is hereby given that any person who wishes to object to the proposed water rates and charges must first file a written legal objection as described below **no later than 5 p.m., Wednesday, October 15, 2025**. Legal objections will only be considered valid if they meet the following procedural and substantive requirements:

- Legal objections **must be in writing and mailed or hand delivered to the Vista Irrigation District Board Secretary** at 1391 Engineer Street, Vista, CA 92081.
- The District Board Secretary must receive your written legal objections no later than 5 p.m., Wednesday, October 15, 2025. **Note that this date is earlier than the deadline to receive written protests.**
- Legal objections must include the following information:
 - Objector's name, parcel number, and/or service address.
 - A statement that your communication constitutes a legal objection.
 - A description of the nature of the legal objection, with sufficient specificity to allow District staff to respond in writing. The objection must state the specific grounds for concerns with the proposed water rates, fees, assessment or charges and why they do not comply with the law, and more specifically, Proposition 218. The objection should include the desired resolution or outcome. A statement that the proposed water rates and charges violate Proposition 218 without an explanation as to the basis of your claim is not sufficient to constitute a legal objection.

At its meeting on Wednesday, November 5, 2025, at 9 a.m. in the Board Room of its Administration Building (1391 Engineer Street, Vista, CA 92081), the Board of Directors will consider and the District shall respond in writing to any timely legal objections. The District's responses shall explain the substantive basis for retaining or altering the proposed water rates, fees, assessments or charges in response to legal objections, including any reasons to reject requested changes. The Board of Directors will consider all timely written legal objections, along with the District's response, and determine whether clarifications or further review or reduction or abandonment of the proposed water rate increases is warranted.

Limitations for Challenging Proposed Rates

You are hereby notified that, in order to file a judicial action or legal proceeding to challenge the proposed rates described in this Notice, you must file a timely written legal objection, and you must commence the action or proceeding within 120 days of the District's approval of the rates.

Failure to submit a timely written legal objection bars any right to challenge the proposed rates through a judicial action or legal proceeding. (Government Code Section 53759.1(b).)

There is a 120-day statute of limitations for judicially challenging the rates set forth in this Notice that runs from the date of the District action to approve the rates, and any legal action is limited to the issues raised in a timely legal objection. (Government Code Section 53759.)

How is the District funded?

The District's water service is primarily funded through customer rates. Customer payments support the District's ability to deliver high-quality, reliable water services while remaining environmentally responsible for the resources in our care. The District is committed to good governance, fiscal accountability, and transparency, with systems and policies in place to uphold the trust of our customers.

What do water rates pay for?

The District uses industry-leading best practices to ensure a resilient water future. Revenue from water rates is reinvested into infrastructure to maintain system reliability and ensure continuous operations and service delivery. We are currently investing funds in projects, including:

- Maintenance and repair of critical infrastructure, such as water reservoirs, pump stations, and groundwater wells, including ongoing projects like the Lonsdale mainline pipe replacement project, rehabilitation of the Deodar Reservoir, and the Edgehill Reservoir replacement and pump station project.
- Maintaining more than 429 miles of water pipelines to ensure water delivery to homes and businesses.
- Maintaining, repairing, and replacing more than 3,800 fire hydrants.
- Hiring and retaining highly skilled, qualified, and licensed staff to operate the water system and conduct water quality monitoring.

These investments ensure that Vista Irrigation District continues to meet the community's water needs reliably and sustainably.

Can the District earn a profit?

No. By law, we cannot charge customers more than it costs to provide the service. The City's public utility systems are governed by the City Council; we do not have shareholders or pay dividends.

Will this rate study account for future inflation?

Yes. The financial analysis anticipates inflation. The District recognizes the impact of record inflation and continues to take fiscally responsible action amid the ever-increasing impacts that state, national, and international decisions have on our economy.

The purpose of a five-year rate study is to adjust for differences between expected and actual expenses and income. It helps determine the revenue needed over the next five years to cover costs, address any surpluses or shortfalls, and ensure reserves remain healthy.

Revenue from rates must also fund reserves to handle unforeseen events, like emergency repairs or droughts, and to meet debt obligations. Reserve funds are not used for routine District expenses. The rate study looks ahead with projected costs and expected increases over the next five to 10 years, aiming to keep the budget balanced and prepared for the future.

What happens if rates are not raised?

Water is a core service necessary for a healthy community and public safety. If rates are not raised, it would negatively impact the reliability and quality of our water delivery system. Critical projects, such as repairs and replacement of our pipes, pump stations, wells, nearly 100-year-old, 11-mile long Vista Flume and reservoirs could not happen. Any delays in implementing these projects would increase the risk of water service interruptions and even infrastructure failures, increase long-term costs and could lead to greater regulatory oversight by state and federal permitting agencies. Ensuring reliable water service and public health relies on continual investments in our infrastructure and water supply systems.

What is the difference between a protest and an objection?

A written protest is the property owner's ability to express their disagreement with the rate increase and requires no formal explanation for the basis of their protest. If a majority of the property owners/ratepayers within the District's service area protest, the new rates cannot be put in place.

An objection may only be made in writing and must specifically state why the proposed rate increases do not comply with the law, and more specifically, Proposition 218. Prior to the Public Hearing on water fees, the Board of Directors will consider all timely written objections, along with staff's responses, and determine whether clarifications, further review, or reduction or abandonment of the proposed water fees are warranted.

If the proposed rates are adopted following the Public Hearing, there is a 120-day statute of limitations for challenging the proposed water rates in court. The 120-day statute of limitations will begin on the date the rates are adopted or the date the resolution adopting the rates goes into effect, whichever is later, and any legal action is limited to the issues raised in a timely submitted objection.

Who do I contact if I have questions about proposed rates or my bill?

The Water Rate Study can be found on the District website listed and linked below. To request a hard copy, please call Customer Service at (760) 597-3100 or email RateStudy@vidwater.org. More information can be found on the webpage, including videos, additional FAQs, and the water bill calculator.

 (760) 597-3100

 RateStudy@vidwater.org



vidwater.org/water-rate-study