



**DATE:** April 14, 2020

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** UNION SANITARY DISTRICT  
5072 BENSON ROAD  
UNION CITY, CA 94587

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### **Union Sanitary District Proposes New Rates**

Union Sanitary District (USD) is proposing rate increases over the next five years to fund vital capital projects that will take over a decade to complete as well as to meet anticipated state and federal regulations. The District recently mailed notices of a May 11, 2020 public hearing on the proposed rate changes to all property owners in Fremont, Newark, and Union City.

“The District is very sensitive to everything transpiring in the world right now, and understands that a wastewater service increase may add further worry,” said General Manager Paul Eldredge. “After carefully considering the impacts of postponing the increase, it became very clear that any delay would result in higher costs to customers and could severely impact the District’s operations in the years ahead.”

It is currently estimated that each year the District’s critical capital projects are delayed costs approximately an additional \$12.5 million per year. USD has infrastructure needs now and for the next 10 years that were overwhelming factors in this decision. The District must move forward with required capital improvement projects to address current issues that make wastewater more costly to treat as well as aging infrastructure that, though well-maintained, has reached the end of its useful life.”

USD’s 10-year Capital Improvement Program is \$644,350,000. “It’s important to consider that construction of these facilities takes several years, and there are substantial savings by proceeding now versus delaying these important projects,” noted Eldredge. “These infrastructure investments are necessary in order to maintain safe, reliable operations that comply with regulatory requirements and protect public health and the environment.”

If adopted, the yearly increases range from about \$33 to \$41 annually for single-family residences, and from about \$32 to \$37 annually for multiple family residences. The current annual rate for single-family residences, the majority of USD's customers, is \$421.37. If approved, in FY 2021 the rate would increase to \$454.57 starting in July of 2020 and would appear on property tax bills, which are usually mailed in October.

The proposed rates are based on the results of a comprehensive study of the cost of providing sewer service from July 2020 through June 2025 which can be found at the District's website at [unionsanitary.ca.gov/sewer-service-charges](https://unionsanitary.ca.gov/sewer-service-charges). They reflect the study's calculations on minimum rate increases for each year that would allow the District to meet its capital, operations, and reserve expense requirements.

"USD's current rates are at the lower end of 35 Bay Area wastewater service providers surveyed, yet we provide some of the most extensive services," said Eldredge. "The District strives to provide reliable, essential service as efficiently and cost-effectively as possible. Even with the proposed increases, USD's rates would remain well below many of those of other agencies."

USD's mission includes protecting public health and the environment through its stewardship of wastewater infrastructure in Fremont, Newark, and Union City by collecting, treating and returning to the environment on average 24 million gallons of wastewater daily. The District maintains a large number of facilities and equipment, including more than 839 miles of sewer lines, seven pump stations, and the buildings and equipment at its 33-acre wastewater treatment plant in Union City. "The cost of operating and maintaining these facilities continues to rise every year, often outpacing inflation," said Eldredge. "The District will continue to seek cost saving and other measures to keep increases as low as possible."

**The notice of a public hearing, which was prepared and sent before the current "Shelter in Place" orders were imposed, notes a community meeting that is scheduled for April 21, 2020 at the Fremont Main Library. Due to current county and state restrictions on public gatherings, this meeting will be replaced with an online or teleconference option. Updates regarding how to connect to the virtual meeting will be provided on the District's website [unionsanitary.ca.gov](https://unionsanitary.ca.gov), [Facebook page](#), and on Twitter [@usdtweets](#). Ratepayers can also contact the District at (510) 477-7500 or via email at [rates@unionsanitary.ca.gov](mailto:rates@unionsanitary.ca.gov).**

Property owners may protest the proposed rates via mail, email, or fax until 5 p.m. on May 11, 2020, or in-person before the close of the public comment portion of the public hearing, which is scheduled to be held at 7 p.m. on May 11, 2020 in the District Boardroom, 5072 Benson Road, Union City. If the current shelter in place orders are extended past the current May 3, 2020 end date, the May 11 public hearing will likely be a teleconference. The District will provide updates to the community, such as how to participate in meetings electronically, as it moves forward.

Protests must contain the property owner's name, the street address or assessor's parcel number (or other parcel description), and must be signed, unless sent via email, by the property owner. Property owners may submit one protest for each parcel owned.

Protests may be submitted by mail to Union Sanitary District – Rate Protest FY 21-25 at 5072 Benson Road, Union City, CA 94587, by email to [rates@unionsanitary.ca.gov](mailto:rates@unionsanitary.ca.gov), or by fax to (510) 477-7500.

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*Union Sanitary District operates a 33-acre wastewater treatment facility in Union City and provides collection, treatment, and disposal services to a population of over 356,000 in Fremont, Newark, and Union City, CA. The District maintains over 839 miles of underground pipeline in its service area. For more information, please visit USD's website at [unionsanitary.ca.gov](http://unionsanitary.ca.gov)*