

COUNTY SANITATION DISTRICTS OF  
LOS ANGELES COUNTY  
P.O. BOX 4000  
WHITTIER, CA 90607-4000

JOHN SMITH  
1234 MAIN STREET  
SANTA CLARITA, CA 91355

We know you probably have questions and we've tried to answer some general ones below. But if you have other questions or want more information, you can call us toll free at (800) 388-4602 between 7:30 am and 4:00 pm Monday through Friday, contact us by e-mail at [RATES@lacs.org](mailto:RATES@lacs.org), or write to us at P.O. Box 4000, Whittier, CA 90607-4000. Please include your name, address, telephone number, and Assessor's Parcel Number (shown below) with any correspondence to help us promptly respond.

## QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

### **How can I obtain more information?**

In addition to directly contacting us, you can visit our Internet web site ([www.lacs.org](http://www.lacs.org)), which contains general information about the Sanitation Districts, specific information about the service charge program, and information about the development of the Alternative Water Resource Management (AWRM) Program for the Santa Clara River. Also, information meetings will be held on May 6, 2009 at 1 and 7:30 pm, May 11, at 7 pm and May 14, at 1 and 7 pm in the Santa Clarita City Hall, 23920 W. Valencia Boulevard.

### **What is a service charge? How is it calculated?**

The cost of operating, maintaining, and upgrading the sewerage system is distributed proportionately among all users of the system based on their wastewater discharge. The resulting charge, after taking all other sources of revenue into consideration, is called the service charge. Although the service charge is a fee for services rendered and not a tax, it is collected annually on the property tax bill as the simplest and most cost effective means of collection. The wastewater discharge for a given parcel is estimated based on the type and size of the structures located on the parcel. For residential properties, use is based on the number of dwelling units (e.g., single-family home, apartments, etc.). For commercial parcels, use is primarily based on square footage although other measures may be used in limited cases (e.g., rooms in hotels). Information on the type and size of your property is obtained from the County Assessor's Office, and the service charge is calculated based on established rates for that type of property.

### **I use a septic system. Do I need to pay this charge?**

No. Parcels that use a septic system are exempt from the District's service charges. If you are on a septic system and you received this notice, please send the District a completed *Claim for Service Charge Refund* and proof that your property is on septic system to the District at P.O. Box 4000, Whittier, CA 90607-4000. The claim form is available on our web site ([www.lacs.org](http://www.lacs.org)) or you can call us and we'll mail you a copy. Once we receive your completed form, we'll do the rest to make sure you don't get charged in the future and to refund any charges you've paid in the past.

### **My water use is low. Can my service charge be reduced?**

Single-family homes that have a substantially lower water consumption rate than an average single-family home are eligible for a reduced charge. If your water usage is less than or equal to 123 hcf (hundred cubic feet) per year (252 gallons per day), you may qualify for a reduction in service charge. If you believe you qualify, please send a completed Claim Form and Water Consumption Form for Rebate, and copies of your water bills showing your water consumption in the last completed fiscal year (July 1 through June 30 period) to County Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County, P.O. Box 4000, Whittier, CA 90607-4000. We will review and notify you of your qualification. You may download these forms from the Districts' Internet web site ([www.lacs.org](http://www.lacs.org)) or you may contact the District and we will mail you a copy.

### **Will I have to pay for new growth? Am I subsidizing new users?**

No. New users, as well as users who significantly increase their use of the system, pay a one time fee called the connection fee. These monies are used to pay for the expansion of facilities needed to treat the new wastewater. The annual service charge that you pay is for treating your wastewater only, not someone else's.

### **What have you done to control the costs that impact the service charge?**

The District continues to strive for cost-efficient operation and maintenance of the sewerage system. When cash flow projections indicate a financial need for large project development and funding, the District will continue to pursue low-interest loans from the State and/or sell bonds in order to spread the project cost over a greater number of years. Recently, Sanitation District staff performed studies and negotiated an alternative program to protect endangered species and agricultural interests along the Santa Clara River, resulting in a projected costs savings to the District of over \$250 million.

### **I have an automatic water softener at my home. How does the water softener rebate program work and how can I apply?**

The Santa Clara River Chloride Reduction Ordinance of 2008 requires the removal of all residential automatic water softeners by June 30, 2009. The District is offering a rebate for the reasonable value of the unit - from \$206 up to \$2,000 - to residents who permanently remove their automatic water softener. To qualify, the unit must be an automatic water softener, the kind to which rock salt or potassium chloride is added, and be currently installed in a house, multiplex, condominium, apartment, or mobile home that is served by the District. Portable exchange tanks (rental units where the softening tank is exchanged periodically by a service provider) are not eligible. For additional details, rebate application forms, and information on qualified alternative units, please visit the Districts' web site at [www.lacs.org](http://www.lacs.org) and click on the quick link, Chloride in the Santa Clarita Valley, or call 877-CUT-SALT.

Your Assessor's Parcel Number is:  
**1234567890**



# SANITATION DISTRICTS OF LOS ANGELES COUNTY

1955 Workman Mill Road, P.O. Box 4000, Whittier, CA 90607-4000

Telephone: (800) 388-4602

## NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING SANTA CLARITA VALLEY SANITATION DISTRICT OF LOS ANGELES COUNTY REGARDING A PROPOSED SEWER SERVICE CHARGE RATE INCREASE TO THE OWNER OF RECORD OF

Assessor's Parcel No. 1234567890  
1234 MAIN STREET, SANTA CLARITA, CA 91355

The Santa Clarita Valley Sanitation District of Los Angeles County (District) is responsible for properly treating and disposing the wastewater generated in most of the City of Santa Clarita and some of the adjacent unincorporated county area. Your wastewater is first collected in the local sewer in front of your property, a facility that is maintained by the County Department of Public Works, and then transferred to large trunk sewers that are owned by the District. From there, the flow is then transported to either the Saugus or Valencia Water Reclamation Plant (WRP) for treatment and ultimate reuse and/or disposal. The District works closely with members of your community and the surrounding area to ensure that all of your wastewater is managed in a safe, environmentally friendly, and cost efficient manner.

The District, in treating your wastewater, must comply with the requirements established by the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB), a state regulatory agency. In 2004, the RWQCB developed chloride standards for the Santa Clara River related to maintaining local habitats, groundwater recharge, and downstream agriculture uses. As originally adopted, the standards established would have required the construction of new facilities costing well over \$500 million. Because of this enormous cost, the District funded and, in collaboration with multiple interested parties, conducted a series of studies that conclusively demonstrated that an alternative approach could be used to meet the requirements at a much lower cost to the community. As a result, in December 2008, the RWQCB (without changing the overall requirements for the Santa Clara River) adopted revised standards based on the results of those studies. Additionally, the recent election to discontinue the use of self-regenerating water softeners means that the District can further reduce the cost of the necessary facilities by over \$70 million. A detailed (and slightly more technical) description of the final recommended project, estimated at approximately \$250 million, is available on the Districts' web site at [www.lacsd.org](http://www.lacsd.org) by clicking on the quick link "Chloride in the Santa Clarita Valley".

Operating costs have also increased significantly in recent years. Just as you have experienced significant increase in the cost of power and fuel, the District has likewise experienced significant increases in the costs of power, fuel, and chemicals whose costs have increased at a rate much greater than inflation. While every effort has been made to minimize the impact of these cost increases, our operations are critically dependent on power, fuel, and chemicals.

We recognize that this project is still very expensive. Accordingly, we've begun taking some steps to help reduce the immediate impact. We are pursuing federal grants, state low-interest loans, and selling bonds. This will allow the construction costs to be spread over a 20 to 30 year period, lessening the impact in any given year. Nonetheless it will be necessary to increase the annual service charge rate over each of the next seven years from the current \$14.92 per month to approximately \$47 per month in fiscal year 2015-16.

Although it is clear that significant rate increases will be needed in all seven years, only three years of increases are recommended at this time. The recommended increases are \$3.00 per month per sewage unit (a sewage unit is equal to the discharge from a single family home) for the first year, \$3.58 per month per sewage unit for the second year, and \$4.25 per month per sewage unit for the third year. This will bring the rate to \$25.75 per month per sewage unit by fiscal year 2011-12, as shown in the table below. Please note that, even with the proposed rate increases, the service charge rate in the District will still be less than what comparable wastewater agencies along the Santa Clara River are currently charging. During the third year, the rates will be reevaluated based on actual construction bids, financing costs, and known operational costs, and recommendations for further increases will be made. If the required service charge rate in fiscal year 2015-16 is \$47 per month per sewage unit, additional annual rate increases will be needed in years four through seven an estimated average of \$5 to \$6 per month.

You are currently paying \$14.92 per month for the wastewater you discharge from your property. If the proposed rate increase is approved, your charges in fiscal years 2009-10, 2010-11, and 2011-12 will be \$17.92 per month, \$21.50 per month, and \$25.75 per month, respectively.

### Service Charge Rate Comparison (\$ Per month per single family home)

Community	Current Rate	Proposed Rates		
		2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
SCV	14.92 <sup>a</sup>	17.92 <sup>a</sup>	21.50 <sup>a</sup>	25.75 <sup>a</sup>
Ventura	16.02	17.14	N/A <sup>b</sup>	N/A <sup>b</sup>
Fillmore	72.00	85.00	98.00	102.00 <sup>c</sup>
Santa Paula	42.68	N/A <sup>b</sup>	N/A <sup>b</sup>	N/A <sup>b,c</sup>
Ojai	52.10	N/A <sup>b</sup>	N/A <sup>b</sup>	N/A <sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup> The District also receives \$5.26 per month of ad valorem (property) taxes. The County Department of Public Works charges \$3.38 per month for local sewer maintenance

<sup>b</sup> Future rates are unknown for these agencies, but rates should be at least as high as they are currently

<sup>c</sup> Projected rate, based on staff discussions

The District's Board of Directors (the mayor of Santa Clarita, a second member of the Santa Clarita City Council, and the chairperson of the County Board of Supervisors) will hold a public hearing on May 26, 2009, to consider public input on the proposed sewer service charge rates. The hearing will be held at 3:30 p.m. in the Santa Clarita City Council Chambers, 23920 W. Valencia Boulevard. Written comments may also be submitted through the mail to the District at P.O. Box 4000, Whittier, CA 90607-4000.

Additionally, in order to provide you with more information and to answer questions and concerns you may have, information meetings will be held on May 6 at 1:00 pm and again at 7:00 pm, May 11 at 7:00 pm, and May 14 at 1:00 pm and again at 7:00 pm at the Santa Clarita City Hall. At these meetings members of the public will be welcome to ask questions about the proposed project and rates necessary to comply with the state chloride requirements.