

What is Proposition 218?

- Proposition 218 is a requirement of the California Constitution, and implementing statutes in the Government Code, that require a local agency to meet certain requirements, including having a Protest Hearing, before water rates can be increased.

When and where is the Protest Hearing?

- February 11, 2026 at 6pm. 7245 Fletcher Farms Dr., Sacramento, CA 95828.

Why are rates going up?

- The District's current rates do not provide sufficient revenue to cover the cost of service. The District's current rates were set in September 2011. The cost of providing water increases every year, and the District's rates have not kept up with those costs.

How did the District come up with the rates?

- Proposition 218 requires that the District's rates be based on the cost to provide service to its customers. The District contracted with Bartle Wells, an established and reputable public finance firm, to prepare the rate study. District staff and the Bartle Wells consultant worked together to develop rates that are both compliant with Proposition 218 and ensure the District continues to deliver safe drinking water to its customers.
- The Rate Study includes a full analysis and explanation of how the proposed rates were reached. It is available on the home page of the District's website.

What happens if rates do not go up?

- Current rates are not sufficient to sustain the utility enterprise funds. Over the past five years, cumulative inflation doubled compared to projected and typical rates. In addition, ongoing deferrals of critical infrastructure could compromise the reliability of the District's aging systems. If critical maintenance and replacements are not prioritized, it could lead to higher costs and possible increased regulatory oversight and fines by permitting agencies.

When was notice of the proposed rates given?

- The District contracted with PIP Sacramento to print and mail the Prop 218 notices. The Prop 218 notices were mailed on December 10, 2025. That provides at least 45 days for ratepayers to submit an objection and is at least 45 days before the protest hearing, complying with the time requirements of Prop 218 and AB 2557. The Notices were mailed to individuals based on both the District's customer list and the most recent Sacramento County Parcel Assessment Roll.
- Additionally, the District put a PDF version of the Notice and Rate Study on the homepage of its website on December 10, 2025. The link to the website was included in the mailed notices.

What if I cannot pay the increased rates?

- The District is required to work with residential customers before water is turned off due to non-payment, and that may include payment plans. The District's policy on this topic is available on its [website](#).

Will the timing of water bills change?

- While the amount of the bill will increase, the District will still bill on a bimonthly basis. At this time, the District is not changing how people can pay water bills.

What is a Protest?

- A "protest" is when a ratepayer or property owner formally protests against a proposed rate increase. A "protest" must be in writing, and the requirements are detailed in the notices mailed out. While an individual can voice support or opposition for the proposed rates at the Protest Hearing, vocal opposition does not count as a protest.
- If a majority of ratepayers or property owners submit written protests against the proposed rates before or during the Protest Hearing on February 11, the Board is prohibited from adopting the rates. Written protests will be accepted until the close of the public hearing.

What is a Written Objection?

- A written objection is *different* than a protest. The Legislature enacted Assembly Bill 2257 which lays out procedures that provide ratepayers an additional opportunity to raise concerns to the District about proposed rates, and allows the District to respond to those concerns.
- As described in the mailed notices, written objections are due January 28, 2026.
- During the regular Board meeting on February 9, 2026, the District will present timely submitted written objections and its written responses to each objection to the Board. The Board will consider each written objection and District response before proceeding to tabulation of protests.