

Due to California's historic drought, Oxnard residents stepped up and conserved water. This resulted in lower revenues. But operating the wastewater (sewer) system did not cost less. The City must not risk the health of the residents or the environment, so this necessitated raising rates.

Recently a sewer manhole collapsed, sending raw sewage into a waterway headed to Ormond Beach. Similar failures can and will happen if the City does not maintain its vital infrastructure. The wastewater facility needs critical repair. Also, the State has health regulations and imposes significant fines for violations so the public health is not jeopardized.

It is never popular to raise utility rates. The City's rate expert minimized the rate increase, considered alternatives to help keep rates low, and informed the public about the system's needs. Also, the City is planning to implement a rate assistance program to help those struggling with the higher rates.

The City has a modern wastewater facility to reclaim water and keep the City healthy. To continue that, the City must have the revenues from the increased rates to meet operations, repair, maintenance and financial obligations. Without this increase the utility's funds will be exhausted within a short time. The City might not meet its duties.

Measure "M" would force the City to return to previous rates, which are simply not enough to fund the wastewater system. A Court will decide the legality of this initiative, which would reduce rates and make it virtually impossible to maintain a functioning wastewater system. A decision could come after the election, should the Measure pass.

Please vote NO on Measure "M" to keep our wastewater system functioning and the residents of Oxnard and our environment healthy.