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NEWS MEDIA CONTACT:

Katie Casey, Communications Manager
(805) 816-4330 | katie.casey@oxnard.org

OXNARD ANNOUNCES MAY 2023 PUBLIC HEARING TO CONSIDER PROPOSED RATE ADJUSTMENTS FOR WATER SERVICES

OXNARD, Calif. – Regular reviews of utility rates are an industry-wide best practice and are typically conducted every 3-5 years. Since Oxnard’s Water Division has not raised rates since 2017, the City engaged an independent consultant to create a [Water Rate Study \(Water Cost of Service Study\)](#).

Based upon the study’s findings, the City is considering proposed rate increases starting in 2023 to keep pace with the rising costs of providing safe, reliable water and to continue making investments in the City’s water infrastructure. The Oxnard City Council will conduct a Public Hearing on Tuesday, May 2, 2023, to consider proposed rates for water services.

The City Council will hear and consider oral testimony and written materials submitted regarding proposed rate increases at the Public Hearing in the Oxnard City Council Chambers, 305 W. Third Street. The City Council will consider protests and comments prior to adjusting or adopting the proposed rate increases.

In compliance with California Proposition 218, the City mailed an official Notice to inform Oxnard property owners and water customers that proposed rate increases are being considered at a Public Hearing on May 2 and of their right to participate and to protest rate increases. The public is encouraged to read the Notice that begins arriving in the mail as early as March 14, or access the digital copy and related information at www.Oxnardwater.org. The public can also request information via email at water.inquiry@oxnard.org or by calling (805) 385-8390.

The rates that customers pay fund a complex water supply and delivery system, including:

- Purchasing, treating and pumping of limited local and imported water sources
- Maintaining more than 500 miles of water pipelines
- Maintaining and repairing critical infrastructure to ensure reliable water delivery
- Replacing aging infrastructure
- Conducting weekly and monthly certified laboratory water quality testing
(About 3,700 annual water samples are collected for about 300 different constituents)
- Maintaining and reading nearly 43,000 water meters
- Hiring and retaining highly skilled, qualified, and licensed staff to operate the water system 24/7

With expertise provided by an independent consultant, a [Water Rate Study \(Water Cost of Service\)](#) was conducted to assess the revenue increases needed to fund operation and maintenance costs, water purchase costs from two water wholesalers (Calleguas Municipal Water District and United Water Conservation District), capital project costs, and establish debt coverage ratios required by bondholders.

Following three community meetings to seek public feedback, and staff presentations to the City Council, Public Works and Transportation Committee, and the Inter-Neighborhood Council Organization (INCO), rate recommendations were presented to the Oxnard City Council during a public rates workshop on Saturday, February 11, 2023.

Sample Bill of Proposed Water Rates

Based on an average single family residence with a ¾” meter using 900 cubic feet of water per month, the increase for the first year of the proposed changes to the monthly fixed water meter rate and water usage charge totals \$12.26 per month, or roughly 40 cents per day.

How to Protest Water Rate Increases

You have the right to protest the proposed rate increase. Each written protest must (1) state the name of the identified property owner or ratepayer; (2) provide the location of the identified property (by street address or assessor’s parcel number); (3) include an original signature of the submitting property owner or ratepayer.

Written protests may be submitted by mail or in person during the public hearing or prior to the conclusion of the public hearing on Tuesday, May 2, 2023 to: Oxnard City Clerk’s Office, 300 West Third Street, 4th Floor, Oxnard, CA 93030.

At the Public Hearing, the City Council will accept written protests and hear all oral comments on the proposed rate changes. Oral comments will not be counted as protests unless accompanied by a written protest. At the conclusion of the Public Hearing, the City Council will consider adoption of the proposed changes as follows:

(1) If the City receives less than a majority of validated protests from property owners or ratepayers, the City Council will consider adopting a new ordinance increasing water rates, effective July 1, 2023.

(2) If a majority of affected property owners or ratepayers file validated written protests against the increase before the conclusion of a required public hearing, the City is prohibited by law from increasing water rates.

Written protests must be received by the City Clerk prior to the conclusion of the Public Hearing on May 2, 2023. The Clerk will not accept or consider any protest received after the conclusion of the Hearing. Only one written protest per affected property will be counted. Telephone, e-mail, and fax protests will not be accepted. For more information about the process, refer to Oxnard Resolution No. 14,877 “Procedures for Establishing and Increasing Fees and Charges Under Proposition 218,” available at www.OxnardWater.org.

Current water rates and the Water Rate Study (Water Cost of Service Study) are also available on the website. For City Council meeting information, go to <http://www.oxnard.org/city-meetings/>.

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