



Montecito Sanitary District

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MEDIA CONTACT:

John Weigold

General Manager

(805) 969-4200

jweigold@montsan.org

DISTRICT ADOPTS FIRST SEWER RATE ADJUSTMENT IN SEVEN YEARS TO SUPPORT AGING INFRASTRUCTURE

MONTECITO, CA - June 11, 2026 - At a public hearing on Wednesday, June 10, the Board of Directors of the [Montecito Sanitary District](#) unanimously approved a [resolution adopting new sewer rates and charges](#) proposed as part of the District's 2026 Sewer Rate Study. This action marks the District's first rate adjustment since 2019 and reflects a comprehensive evaluation of the wastewater system, including the District's first sewer rate study in more than 10 years.

The District began its rate-setting process in November 2025 by hiring independent financial consultant Robert D. Niehaus, Inc. to conduct a comprehensive sewer rate study. The study evaluated the cost of providing wastewater service and identified rising operating costs, the costs of addressing aging infrastructure, and evolving regulatory requirements. Based on these findings, the study recommended phased rate adjustments over the next five years beginning July 1, 2026.

Much of the District's wastewater system was constructed in the 1960s, and significant components of the treatment plant are approaching or have exceeded their expected service life. The District's long-term planning efforts identified more than \$60 million in capital improvements needed over the next five years to repair and replace critical infrastructure, including rehabilitation of the wastewater treatment plant and upgrades to pipelines, manholes, lift stations, and other critical facilities.

"The District hasn't made any rate adjustments in seven years, yet much of our infrastructure is more than 60 years old and key components are nearing failure and are increasingly difficult to repair or replace," said Board President Rock Rockenbach. "As stewards of this critical public infrastructure, it was important for our Board to take decisive action now to reinvest in the system, reduce the risk of sewer spills, and ensure reliable, high-quality service for years to come."

Following the Board's action, the new rates will be phased over five years, starting on July 1 of each year, to spread costs over time and reduce near-term impacts on customers. For the typical single-family residence, sewer rates will increase by approximately \$14.25 per month in the first year, or \$0.47 per day. Condo or second-unit rates will increase by about \$5.85 per

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month, or \$0.20 per day. Commercial rate changes vary based on water use and sewage strength classification.

Because sewer service charges are collected annually through the County of Santa Barbara property tax roll, the approved rates will first appear on property tax bills issued this fall.

Before adopting the rates, the District updated its [Sewer System Management Plan](#), developed a five-year Capital Improvement Plan, and mailed a [Proposition 218 notice](#) to all affected property owners outlining the proposed rate adjustments and process for public participation. Ahead of the public hearing, the District received one written legal objection and no written protests.

"The District took a strategic and thoughtful approach to this rate-setting process to better understand the long-term needs of our wastewater system," said John Weigold, General Manager. "The adopted rates provide a responsible path forward that supports the District's operational needs, infrastructure priorities, and long-term financial stability."

More information regarding the District's rate-setting process and 2026 Sewer Rate Study is available online at www.montsan.org/rates. Community members can also sign up to receive District news and updates by email at www.montsan.org/news.

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About the Montecito Sanitary District

Since 1947, the [Montecito Sanitary District](#) has served the Montecito community by managing wastewater collection, treatment, and disposal across an 8.9-square-mile service area. The District serves approximately 9,000 residents and 3,185 properties. Its mission is to protect public health and safety and to preserve the natural environment through the collection, treatment, and disposal of wastewater in the most cost-effective way possible.