

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: February 8, 2019**

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**Alameda County Water District Board of Directors Approves Increases in Water Rates, Implementation of New Water Shortage Emergency Stage Rates, Changes to the Fireline Policy, and an Increase in Customer Assistance Program Credit**

**Fremont, Calif.** — On February 7, 2019, the Alameda County Water District Board of Directors approved a 2-year water rate increase -- 4 percent beginning March 1, 2019 and 4 percent beginning March 1, 2020, to both the bimonthly service charge and water consumption charge. The Board also approved the water shortage emergency stage rates.

The approved 4 percent water rate increases for each of the next two years results in an average increase of \$2.41 per month to residential customers in 2019 and another \$2.51 per month in 2020. This totals to about \$5.02 per month over the two-year period. ACWD's water rates continue to be in the lowest third of 30 water utilities in the Bay Area.

About a third of the total revenue that ACWD collects will be used to fund critical infrastructure improvement, including the ongoing replacement of about 900 miles of aging water mains, and constructing fish ladders along Alameda Creek. The remaining revenue will be used to cover increasing operations and maintenance costs.

To ensure sufficient revenue is available during a water shortage emergency, the Board for the first time adopted "stage rates." These rates would only be implemented in the event of a water emergency declared by the Board. There would be a Public Hearing process for the Board to declare the water emergency.

The Board of Directors does not take water rates increases lightly, but must ensure the District continues to deliver reliable and high-quality water service. The revenue gap currently faced cannot be closed by further cost-cutting. Many of the costs associated with protecting water quality and reliable service are fixed costs.

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ACWD recognizes some customers may experience difficulty paying their water bills. The customer assistance program, known as Help on Tap, provides income-qualified residential customers a credit on their bimonthly water service charge. The Board approved a credit increase from \$20 to \$25 on the bimonthly water service charge. Applications for Help on Tap are available on the ACWD's website at [www.acwd.org/HOT](http://www.acwd.org/HOT).

The Board also approved changes to the fireline policy. Fireline residential service is water service for both residential water needs and a home's fire sprinkler system through the same connection to the water system. This type of service is common for homes built since the 1990s. The policy changes result in billing all residential fireline accounts based on the smallest meter that could provide adequate water service absent the fire sprinkler system. Most customers that have a residential fireline will experience a decrease in their service charge, the amount of which depends on their meter size. In the coming weeks, ACWD will contact eligible fireline customers to advise them of the policy updates.

For more information, please visit our website [www.acwd.org/rates](http://www.acwd.org/rates).

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For more than 100 years, the Alameda County Water District has supplied water to the residents and businesses of southern Alameda County. ACWD supplies drinking water to the more than 356,000 people living in the cities of Fremont, Newark and Union City. For more information, please visit [www.acwd.org](http://www.acwd.org).