

Staff Report

In accordance with the District Act, District staff has prepared an annual report on the Protection and Augmentation of Water Supplies (PAWS), which was filed with the Clerk of the Board on February 27, 2026.

The Report is the 55th annual report on the Santa Clara Valley Water District's (Valley Water) activities in the protection and augmentation of the water supplies. This Report is prepared in accordance with the requirements of the District Act, section 26.5. The Report provides information on water requirements and water supply availability, and financial analysis of Valley Water's water utility system. The financial analysis includes future capital improvement and maintenance requirements, operating requirements, financing methods and staff's recommended groundwater production and other water charges by zone for fiscal year (FY) 2026-27.

The PAWS Report can be found at www.valleywater.org.

The Rate Setting Process

According to Section 26.3 of the District Act, proceeds from groundwater production charges can be used for the following purposes:

1. Pay for construction, operation and maintenance of imported water facilities
2. Pay for imported water purchases
3. Pay for constructing, maintaining and operating facilities which will conserve or distribute water including facilities for groundwater recharge, surface distribution, and purification and treatment
4. Pay for debt incurred for purposes 1, 2 and 3.

This year, as in past years, staff has carefully evaluated the activities that can be paid for by groundwater production charges. The work of Valley Water is divided into projects. Every project has a detailed description including objectives, milestones, and an estimate of resources needed to deliver the project. To ensure compliance with the District Act, each project manager must justify whether or not groundwater production charges can be used to pay for the activities associated with their project. The financial analysis presented in the annual report is based on the financial forecasts for these vetted projects.

Resolution 99-21 guides staff in the development of the overall pricing structure based on principles established in 1971. The general approach is to charge the recipients of the various benefits for the benefits received. More specifically, pricing is structured to manage surface water, groundwater supplies and recycled water conjunctively to prevent the over use or under use of the groundwater basin. Consequently, staff is very careful to recommend pricing for groundwater production charges, treated water charges, surface water charges and recycled water charges that work in concert to achieve the effective use of available resources.

This year's rate setting process is being conducted consistent with Board Resolutions 99-21 and 12-10. The rate setting process for both groundwater and surface water is consistent with Proposition 26 requirements that the groundwater production and surface water charges are no more than necessary to cover reasonable costs and bear a fair or reasonable relationship to the rate payor's burdens on or benefits received from the groundwater and surface water programs. The surface water charge setting process mirrors the process described in Proposition 218 for property-related fees for water services. As in the past, the Board will continue to hold public hearings and seek input from its advisory committees and the public before rendering a final decision on groundwater production and other water charges for FY 2026-27.

Staff Recommendations

Exhibit 1 shows the recommended groundwater production charges and other charges for FY 2026-27.

Exhibit 1 **Summary of Charges (Dollars Per Acre Foot, \$/AF)**

		Dollars Per Acre Foot			
	Basic User/Groundwater Production Charge	FY 2024-25	FY 2025-26	Recommended FY 2026-27	
Zone W-2 (North County)	Municipal and Industrial	2,229.00	2,450.00	2,673.00	
	Agricultural	39.80	43.00	46.50	
	Surface Water Charge				
	Surface Water Master Charge	61.00	67.00	73.00	
	Total Surface Water, Municipal and Industrial*	2,290.00	2,517.00	2,746.00	
	Total Surface Water, Agricultural*	100.80	110.00	119.50	
	Treated Water Charges				
	Contract Surcharge	115.00	115.00	115.00	
	Total Treated Water Contract Charge**	2,344.00	2,565.00	2,788.00	
	Non-Contract Surcharge	200.00	200.00	200.00	
Total Treated Water Non-Contract Charge***	2,429.00	2,650.00	2,873.00		
Zone W-5 (Llagas Subbasin)	Basic User/Groundwater Production Charge				
	Municipal and Industrial	579.00	624.50	665.50	
	Agricultural	39.80	43.00	46.50	
	Surface Water Charge				
	Surface Water Master Charge	61.00	67.00	73.00	
	Total Surface Water, Municipal and Industrial*	640.00	691.50	738.50	
	Total Surface Water, Agricultural*	100.80	110.00	119.50	
	Recycled Water Charges				
	Municipal and Industrial	559.00	604.50	645.50	
	Agricultural	70.15	73.35	76.85	
Zone W-7 (Coyote Valley)	Basic User/Groundwater Production Charge				
	Municipal and Industrial	750.50	834.50	913.00	
	Agricultural	39.80	43.00	46.50	
	Surface Water Charge				
	Surface Water Master Charge	61.00	67.00	73.00	
	Total Surface Water, Municipal and Industrial*	811.50	901.50	986.00	
	Total Surface Water, Agricultural*	100.80	110.00	119.50	
Zone W-8 (Uvas/ Chesbro)	Basic User/Groundwater Production Charge				
	Municipal and Industrial	430.00	464.00	501.00	
	Agricultural	39.80	43.00	46.50	
	Surface Water Charge				
	Surface Water Master Charge	61.00	67.00	73.00	
	Total Surface Water, Municipal and Industrial*	491.00	531.00	574.00	
Total Surface Water, Agricultural*	100.80	110.00	119.50		

*Note: The total surface water charge is the sum of the basic user charge (which equals the groundwater production charge) plus the water master charge
 **Note: The total treated water contract charge is the sum of the basic user charge (which equals the groundwater production charge) plus the contract surcharge
 ***Note: The total treated water non-contract charge is the sum of the basic user charge (which equals the groundwater production charge) plus the non-contract surcharge

Staff proposes a 9.1% increase in the North County Zone W-2 Municipal and Industrial groundwater production charge from \$2,450.00 per acre foot (AF) to \$2,673.00/AF. Staff recommends maintaining the treated water surcharge on treated water delivered under the contracts with retail agencies at \$115.00/AF, and maintaining the non-contract treated water surcharge at \$200.00/AF. The proposal equates to a monthly bill increase for the average household of \$5.63 or about 19 cents a day.

In the South County Zone W-5, staff proposes a 6.6% increase in the M&I groundwater production charge from \$642.50/AF to \$665.50/AF. The proposal equates to a monthly bill increase for the average household of \$1.04 or about 3 cents per day.

In the South County Zone W-7, staff proposes a 9.4% increase in the M&I groundwater production charge from \$834.50/AF to \$913.00/AF. The proposal equates to a monthly bill increase for the average household of \$1.98 or about 7 cents per day.

In the South County Zone W-8, staff proposes an 8% increase in the M&I groundwater production charge from \$464.00/AF to \$501.00/AF. The proposal equates to a monthly bill increase for the average household of \$0.93 or about 3 cents per day.

Customers in both areas of North and South County may also experience additional charge increases enacted by their retail water providers.

Staff proposes an 8% increase in the agricultural groundwater production charge, which would mean an increase from \$43.00/AF to \$46.50/AF. The proposed groundwater production charge equates to 9.25% of the lowest M&I rate (Zone W-8) and would translate to an increase of \$0.58 per month per acre, assuming 2 (two) acre-feet of water usage per acre per year.

Staff recommends a 9.1% increase to the surface water master charge from \$67.00/AF to \$73.00/AF to align revenues with the costs related to managing, operating and billing for surface water diversions. This increase results in an 8.7% increase in the overall North County municipal and industrial surface water charge, to \$2,788.00/AF. For South County, the overall increases in the basic user charge and surface water master charge result in a total surface water charge for M&I water as follows: \$738.50/AF, or a 6.8% increase for Zone W-5; \$986.00/AF, or a 9.4% increase for Zone W-7; and \$574.00/AF, or an 8.1% increase for Zone W-8. The total agricultural surface water charge in any zone represents up to an 8.6% increase at \$119.50/AF.

For recycled water, staff recommends increasing the M&I charge by 6.8% to \$645.50/AF. For agricultural recycled water, the proposed increase is 4.8% to \$76.85/AF. The increase maximizes cost recovery while concurrently providing an economic incentive to use recycled water. This pricing is consistent with the provisions of the "Wholesale-Retailer Agreement for Supply of Recycled Water Between Santa Clara Valley Water District and City of Gilroy." The proposed rate changes maximize cost recovery while concurrently providing an economic incentive to use recycled water.

The proposed groundwater production charges for FY 2026-27 are necessary to pay ongoing operations and maintenance of the existing water utility system, investments in water supply infrastructure rehabilitation and upgrades, and new water supply reliability investments. Valley Water remains in an era of investment driven by infrastructure rehabilitation needs.

Staff recommends setting the State Water Project Tax at \$28 million for FY 2026-27. This translates to a property tax bill for the average single-family residence of roughly \$46.00 per year. Valley Water incurs an annual indebtedness to the State of California pursuant to its Water Supply Contract dated November 20, 1961. Such indebtedness is proportional to Valley Water's allocation of water from the State Water Project and pays for construction, maintenance and operation of state water project infrastructure and facilities. Staff anticipates that Valley Water's contractual indebtedness to the State under the State Water Supply Contract for FY 2026-27 will be at least \$35.5 million. Staff's

recommendation regarding the State Water Project tax is consistent with Valley Water’s past practice and with the approach of other water districts and agencies that maintain State Water Project supply contracts.

Projections

Exhibit 2 shows actual and projected District-managed water use. Water usage in FY 2024-25 was estimated at approximately 219,000 AF, which is roughly 3,000 AF lower than budgeted. For the current year, FY 2025-26, water use was budgeted at 219,000 AF, reflecting relatively flat use when compared to FY 2024-25 actuals. FY 2025-26 actuals are anticipated to come in lower than budget due to lower treated water deliveries from a pipeline maintenance project; staff anticipates there will be some higher groundwater pumping to offset the reduced treated water deliveries to certain Water Retailers. Water use for FY 2026-27 is projected at 221,500 AF reflecting slightly increased usage due to continued rebound from the 2023 drought.

Exhibit 2 District-managed Water Use Projection (1,000’s AF)

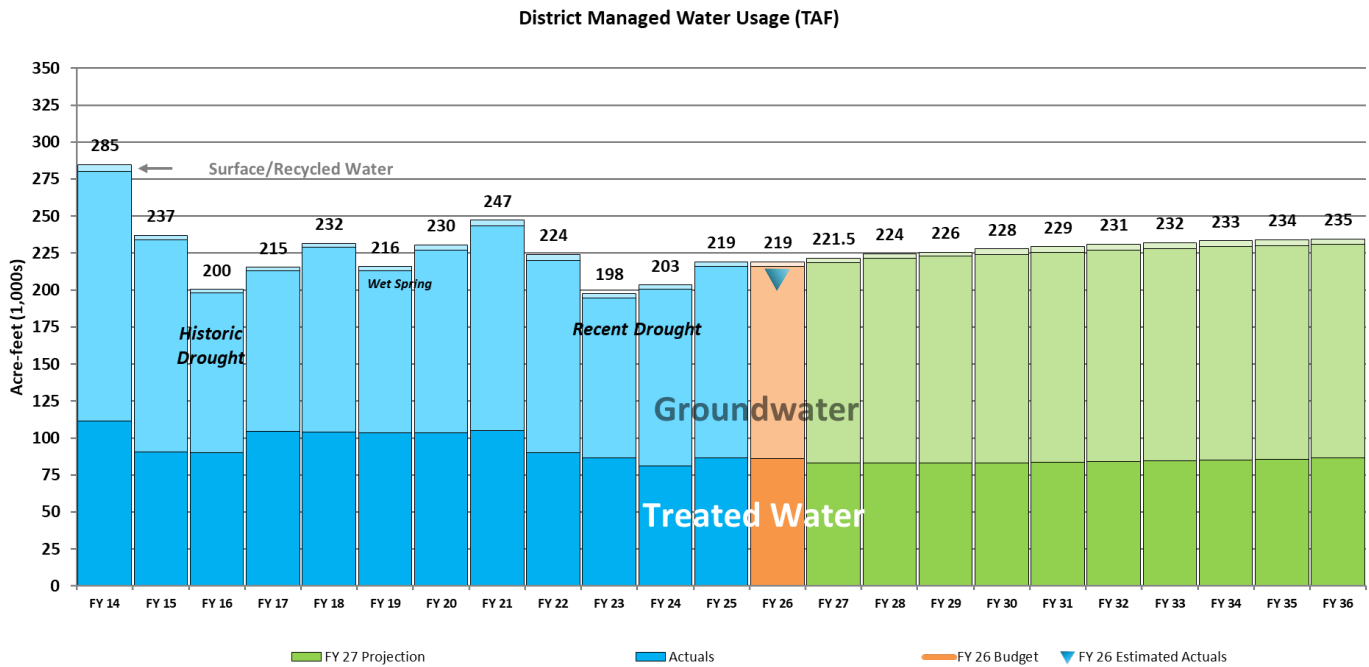


Exhibit 3 shows key financial indicators with staff’s recommendation projected to FY 2031-32. The debt service coverage ratio, which is a ratio of revenue less operations expenses divided by annual debt service, is targeted at 2.0 or better which helps to ensure financial stability and continued high credit ratings keeping cost to borrow low.

Exhibit 3 **5-Year Water Charge and Financial Indicator Projection**

Base Case	Adopted						
	Budget						
	2025–26	2026–27	2027–28	2028–29	2029–30	2030–31	2031–32
No. County (W-2) M&I GWP charge (\$/AF)	\$2,450	\$2,673	\$2,916	\$3,181.50	\$3,471	\$4,004	\$4,300.50
Y-Y Growth %	9.9%	9.1%	9.1%	9.1%	9.1%	7.4%	7.4%
So. County (W-5) M&I GWP charge (\$/AF)	\$624.50	\$665.50	\$709.50	\$756.50	\$806.50	\$859.50	\$916
Y-Y Growth %	7.9%	6.6%	6.6%	6.6%	6.6%	6.6%	6.6%
So. County (W-7) M&I GWP charge (\$/AF)	\$834.50	\$913	\$999	\$1,093	\$1,195.50	\$1,308	\$1,431
Y-Y Growth %	11.2%	9.4%	9.4%	9.4%	9.4%	9.4%	9.4%
So. County (W-8) M&I GWP charge (\$/AF)	\$464	\$501	\$541	\$584	\$631	\$681	\$735
Y-Y Growth %	8.0%	8.0%	8.0%	8.0%	8.0%	8.0%	8.0%
Operating & Capital Reserve	\$74,567	\$60,588	\$66,653	\$71,205	\$74,686	\$77,742	\$83,017
Supplemental Water Supply Reserve (\$K)	\$8,677	\$12,077	\$15,477	\$18,877	\$19,277	\$19,677	\$20,077
Drought Contingency Reserve (\$K)	\$1,000	\$4,000	\$8,000	\$12,000	\$16,000	\$20,000	\$20,000
Sr. Lien Debt Service Coverage Ratio (1.25 min)	2.09	2.27	2.16	2.24	2.37	2.49	2.62
South County (Deficit)/Reserves (\$K)	\$9,044	\$8,914	\$4,810	\$931	\$661	\$769	\$3,283

A significant portion of the projected increases in the groundwater production charge are driven by the capital improvement program as shown in Exhibit 4. Around \$7.0 billion in capital investments are planned for the next 10 years. Approximately \$1.7 billion of the program is allocated to seismically retrofit Anderson Dam, our county’s largest reservoir. Roughly \$600 million in preliminary costs is for the Dam Safety Program for Almaden, Calero, Coyote and Guadalupe Dams.

Two new projects were approved by the Board to be included in the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) FY 2027-31 Five-Year Plan in January 2026. Pure Water Silicon Valley Project Full-Scale Facility, which previously had project costs as a placeholder, is now in the CIP FY 2027–31 Five-Year Plan, with an estimated cost of \$2.45 billion. The first step in this project is the development of the Pure Water Silicon Valley Project –Demonstration Facility, which is in the currently adopted CIP and has already begun. The Full-Scale Facility will be able to produce up to 24,000 AF of water per year, providing a locally controlled, drought-resilient water supply upon completion, which is estimated in 2036. The Santa Teresa Water Treatment Plant Infrastructure Rehabilitation project was recommended from the Water Treatment Plant Master Plan Implementation effort currently underway and will replace aging assets throughout the plant while increasing plant reliability. This project is anticipated to be completed in 2034 with an estimated cost of \$243 million.

The remaining portion of the capital program is primarily dedicated to asset management of Water Utility Enterprise facilities throughout the county. Staff annually conducts a validation process examining the business case for capital solutions in comparison with alternative operations, maintenance, and non-asset based solutions to ensure that Valley Water invests in the right solutions or projects at the right time for the right costs and for the right reasons. All newly proposed projects undergo the validation process prior to being proposed for inclusion in the CIP.

Over the next 10 years, operating outlays are projected to increase an average of 5.0% per year driven by: 1) the ramp up of payments associated with both the Delta Conveyance Project; and 2) the inclusion of the B.F. Sisk Dam Raise Project at San Luis Reservoir. Operations cost increases are also driven by inflation including cost increases associated with employee salaries and benefits. Debt service is projected to rise from \$108.6 million in FY 2026-27 to \$300.8 million in FY 2035-36 as a result of periodic debt issuances to fund the capital program.

Exhibit 4 Cost Projection by Cost Center (\$M)

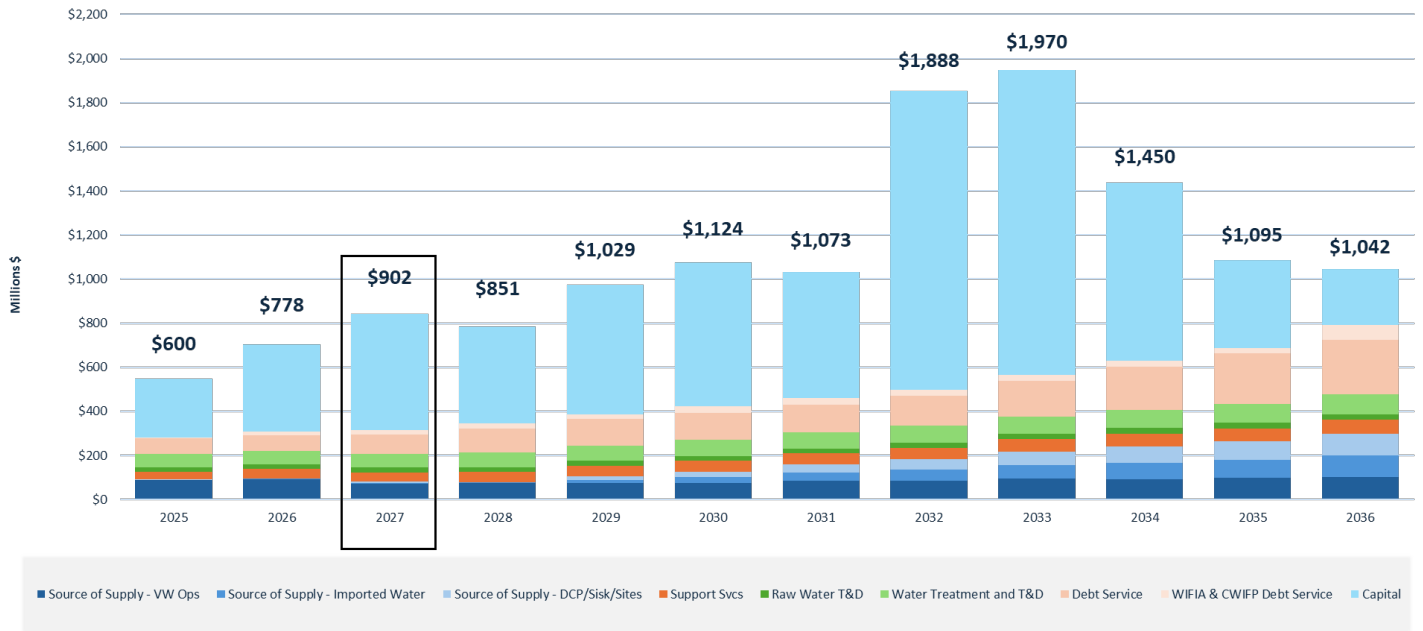


Exhibit 5 shows the groundwater production charge projection for the next 10 years and assumes a continuation of the level of service provided in FY 2025-26 and funding of the draft CIP FY 2027-31 Five-Year Plan. Note that there are initiatives and potential uncertainties that could result in the identification of additional capital or operations projects that are not reflected in the projection.

Exhibit 5 10-Year Groundwater Charge Projection

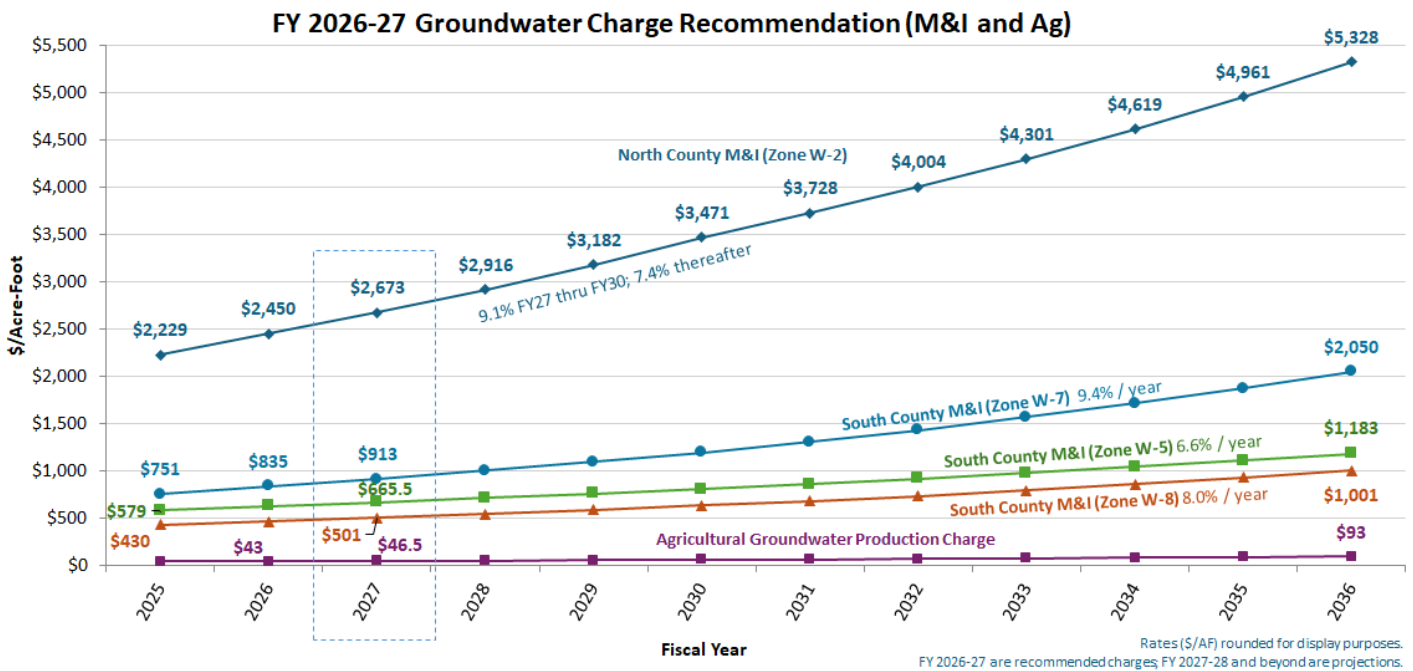


Exhibit 6 shows a comparison of the adjusted proposed groundwater production and treated water charges relative to the anticipated increases for the following similar agencies: Metropolitan Water District, Orange County Water District, San Diego County Water Authority, San Francisco PUC (Hetch Hetchy), and Zone 7.

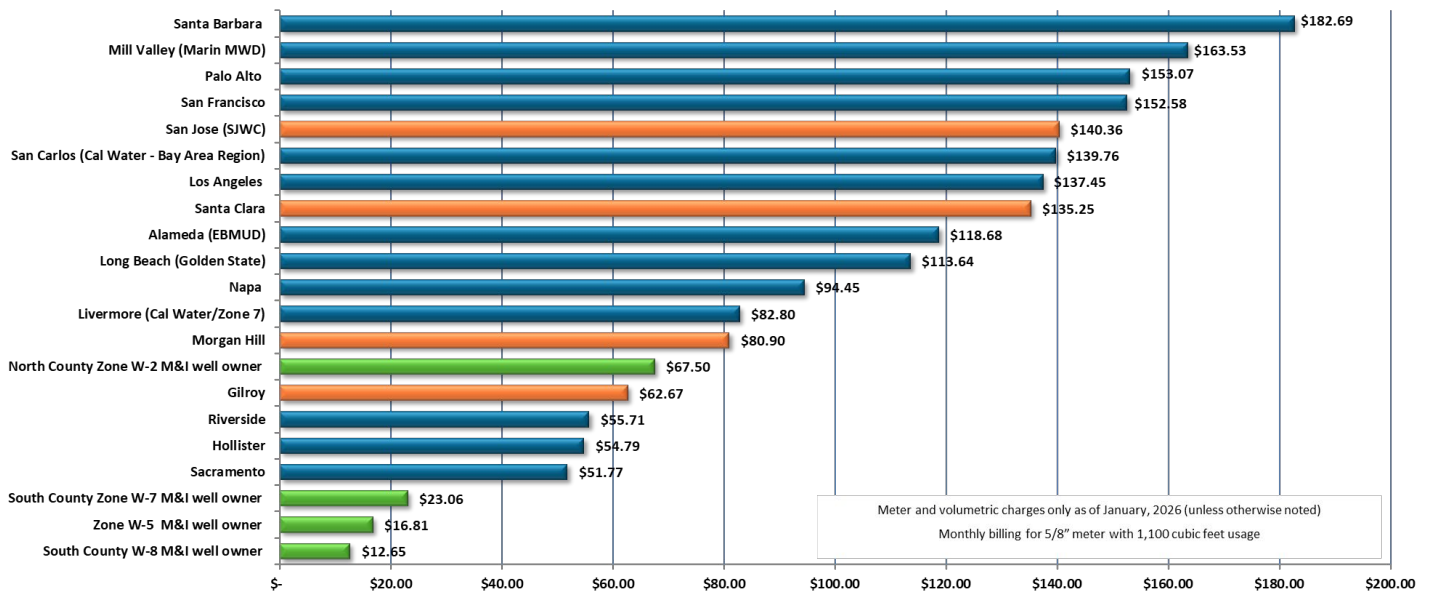
Anticipated FY 2025-26 Water Charge Increases for Similar Agencies

Agency			% inc.				% inc.	
	FY 24	FY24 to FY25	FY 25	FY25 to FY26	FY 26	FY26 to FY27	FY 27	
SCVWD North W-2 (Groundwater prdctn per AF) ¹	\$1,974	12.9%	\$2,229	9.9%	\$2,450	9.1%	\$2,673	
SCVWD North W-2 (Treated Water per AF) ¹	\$2,089	12.2%	\$2,344	9.4%	\$2,565	8.7%	\$2,788	
SCVWD South W-5 (Groundwater prdctn per AF) ¹	\$544	6.6%	\$579	6.6%	\$625	6.6%	\$665.5	
SCVWD South W-7 (Groundwater prdctn per AF) ¹	\$658	14.2%	\$751	14.2%	\$835	9.4%	\$913	
SCVWD South W-8 (Groundwater prdctn per AF) ¹	\$398	8.0%	\$430	8.0%	\$464	8.0%	\$501	
Metropolitan WD (Untreated Water per AF) ²	\$1,070	2.5%	\$1,097	7.6%	\$1,181	0.7%	\$1,189	
Metropolitan WD (Treated Water per AF) ²	\$1,423	11.0%	\$1,580	9.1%	\$1,725	0.5%	\$1,733	
Orange County WD (Groundwater per AF)	\$624	10.3%	\$688	3.3%	\$711	0.0%	\$711	
San Diego County WA (Treated Water per AF) ²	\$2,147	10.4%	\$2,369	11.7%	\$2,647	1.7%	\$2,691	
San Francisco PUC (Treated Water per AF) ^{3,3}	\$2,430	8.0%	\$2,625	2.7%	\$2,696	7.4%	\$2,895	
Zone 7 (Treated Water per AF) ²	\$1,853	4.3%	\$1,932	1.2%	\$1,956	0.0%	\$1,956	

1. Amounts may be rounded to the nearest dollar.
2. MWD, SDCWA and Zone 7 rates based on calendar year (i.e., 2026 rate would be effective on 1/1/2026)
3. SFPUC rate includes BAWSCA bond surcharge

Exhibit 7 shows a comparison of the average monthly bill for several of Valley Water’s retail customers (e.g., San Jose Water Company, City of Santa Clara, City of Morgan Hill, and City of Gilroy) relative to Valley Water’s perennial list of retail agency comparators across the state. SCVWD retailer rates shown include the staff recommended increase for FY 2026-27. North County and South County well owner rates are also shown, which exclude pumping costs (e.g., electricity) and well maintenance costs.

Exhibit 7 Retail Agency Benchmarks



Cost of Service

The cost-of-service analyses for FY 2026-27 are shown in Exhibit 8 for North County and Exhibit 9 for South County. The exhibits are laid out in a format that follows six industry standard rate making steps.

1. Identify utility pricing objectives and constraints
2. Identify revenue requirements
3. Allocate costs to customer classes
4. Reduce costs by revenue offsets or non-rate related funding sources
5. Develop unit costs by customer class or net revenue requirements by customer class
6. Develop unit rates by customer class

Water Utility pricing objectives and constraints representing rate making step 1 are identified in Resolution 99-21, the District Act, Proposition 218, Proposition 26, and existing contracts.

Step 2 includes identifying and segregating Water Utility Fund costs from Watershed and Administrative Funds and allocating Water Utility costs between zones W-2 (North County) and W-5, W-7, and W-8 (South County) according to benefits provided in each zone. Step 3 involves allocating costs by customer class either directly or based on water usage. Steps 4 and 5 result in unit costs by customer class after applying non-rate related offsets.

Step 6 includes two adjustments. The first adjustment is the application of 1% ad valorem property taxes, to offset the costs of agricultural water in accordance with Board Resolution 99- 21, also known as the "Open Space Credit." For FY 2026-27, staff is proposing a transfer of \$4.35M in 1% ad valorem property taxes from the General Fund and the Watershed Stream Stewardship Fund into the Water Utility Fund. The true-up adjustments related to FY 2023-24 increased the amount of Open Space Credit needed in FY 2026-27.

The second adjustment involves reallocating a portion of the cost of treated water (or recycled water in the case of South County) to groundwater and surface water users. Treated and recycled water offsets the need to pump groundwater and therefore increases the volume of stored groundwater and improves reliability. The reallocation of a portion of the treated water cost for example represents the value of treated water to groundwater and surface water users and facilitates a pricing structure that prevents the over use of the groundwater basin. Preventing over use not only preserves groundwater for use in times of drought, but also prevents land subsidence or sinking of the land, which can cause serious infrastructure issues.

Another aspect of the second adjustment is related to setting the basic user charge for surface water equal to the groundwater production charge. Surface water use is effectively in-lieu groundwater use permitted by Valley Water to help preserve the groundwater basin. As such, the costs related to preserving the groundwater basin provide value to surface water users because it makes available District surface water, which otherwise would only be used for groundwater recharge. Similarly, the costs related to providing surface water benefit groundwater users because surface water usage helps preserve the groundwater basin. The second adjustment reallocates costs between surface water and groundwater customers in order to set the basic user charge for surface water equal to the groundwater production charge in recognition of this conjunctive use relationship, and in accordance with board policy. A 2015 study was conducted by Raftelis Financial Consultants, Inc (RFC) that confirms the reasonableness of such an adjustment. The report titled "Report Documenting the Reasonableness of the Conjunctive Use Benefit of Surface Water and Recycled Water to Groundwater Customers" documents the support and justification for the water district's cost of service methodology and can be found on Valley Water's website.

Cost of Service North County Zone W-2 (\$K)

FY 27 Projection (\$ in Thousands)	Zone W-2					Total W-2
	Groundwater		Treated Water	Surface Water		
	M&I	AG	M&I	M&I	Ag	
1 Operating Outlays						
2 Operations/Operating Projects	66,029	546	132,521	1,035	0	200,132
3 SWP Imported Water Costs	9,252	77	26,123	396	0	35,848
4 Debt Service	26,843	225	81,250	309	0	108,627
5 Total Operating Outlays	102,124	849	239,894	1,740	0	344,607
6 Capital & Transfers						
7 Operating Transfers Out	8,412	70	8,980	65	0	17,527
8 Capital Outlays excl. carryforward	155,882	1,305	343,988	1,199	0	502,375
9 Total Capital & Transfers	164,294	1,376	352,968	1,264	0	519,902
10 Total Annual Program Costs	266,417	2,225	592,862	3,005	0	864,509
11 Revenue Requirement Offsets	Step 3 - Allocate costs to customer classes					
12 Capital Cost Recovery	(5,636)	(47)	(6,017)	(44)	(0)	(11,745)
13 Debt Proceeds	(125,729)	(1,053)	(277,449)	(967)	(0)	(405,198)
14 Inter-governmental Services	(629)	(5)	(672)	(5)	(0)	(1,311)
15 SWP Property Tax	(6,793)	(57)	(19,179)	(291)	(0)	(26,320)
16 South County Deficit/Reserve	(2,161)	(18)	(2,307)	(17)	(0)	(4,503)
17 Interest Earnings	(3,768)	(32)	(4,022)	(29)	(0)	(7,851)
18 Inter-zone Interest	50	0	54	0	0	105
19 Capital Contributions	(242)	(2)	(258)	(2)	(0)	(504)
20 Transfers In	(519)	(4)	(554)	(4)	(0)	(1,081)
21 Other	(771)	(6)	(762)	(11)	(0)	(1,551)
22 Reserve Requirements	16,517	86	40,008	127	0	56,738
23 Adjusted Revenue Requirement (FY 27)	136,736	1,086	321,703	1,763	0	461,289
24 Adjusted Revenue Requirement (FY 24 adj)	8,337	-	(27,696)	(711)	-	(20,070)
25 Total Adjusted Revenue Requirement	145,073	1,086	294,007	1,052	0	441,218
26 Volume (KAF)	77.6	0.7	82.9	0.6	0.0	161.7
27 Revenue Requirement (\$ per AF)	\$ 1,869	\$ 1,671	\$ 3,548	\$ 1,753	\$ 2,847	\$ -
28 Adjustments for Agricultural Preservation	Step 5 - Develop unit costs by customer class					
29 Allocate WU 1% Ad Valorem Prop Tax	-	(1,056)	-	-	(0)	(1,056)
30 Transfer GF 1% Ad valorem Prop Tax	-	-	-	-	-	-
31 Transfer WS 1% Ad Valorem Prop Tax	-	-	-	-	-	-
32 Revenue Requirement (\$ per AF)	\$ 1,869	\$ 46	\$ 3,548	\$ 1,753	\$ 120	\$ -
33 Adjustments to Facilitate Conjunctive Use	Step 6 - Rate Design					
34 Reallocate TW/SW/RW costs	62,395	-	(62,990)	596	-	0
35 Water Charge (\$ per AF)	\$ 2,673.00	\$ 46.50	\$ 2,788.00	\$ 2,746.00	\$ 119.50	\$ -
36 Total Revenue (\$K)	\$ 207,468	\$ 30	\$ 231,016	\$ 1,648	\$ 0	\$ 440,162

Cost of Service South County Zone W-5 (\$K)

FY 27 Projection (\$ in Thousands)	Zone W-5							Total W-5
	Groundwater		Surface Water		Recycled Water			
	M&I	AG	M&I	AG	M&I	AG		
1 Operating Outlays								
2 Operations/Operating Projects	9,319	10,763	201	342	263	225	21,113	
3 SWP Imported Water Costs	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
4 Debt Service	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
5 Total Operating Outlays	9,319	10,763	201	342	263	225	21,113	
6 Capital & Transfers								
7 Operating Transfers Out	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
8 Capital Outlays excl. carryforward	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
9 Total Capital & Transfers	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
10 Total Annual Program Costs	9,319	10,763	201	342	263	225	21,113	
11 Revenue Requirement Offsets								
12 Capital Cost Recovery	2,513	2,936	37	64	838	718	7,106	
13 Debt Proceeds	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
14 Inter-governmental Services	(34)	(40)	(1)	(1)	-	-	(75)	
15 SWP Property Tax	(561)	(655)	(8)	(14)	(21)	(18)	(1,277)	
16 South County Deficit/Reserve	1,111	711	(8)	16	369	19	2,218	
17 Interest Earnings	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
18 Inter-zone Interest	(33)	(38)	(0)	(1)	(1)	(1)	(75)	
19 Capital Contributions	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
20 Transfers In	(46)	(53)	(1)	(1)	(2)	(1)	(104)	
21 Other	(63)	(73)	(0)	(1)	(1)	(1)	(140)	
22 Reserve Requirements	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
23 Adjusted Revenue Requirement (FY 27)	12,207	13,549	220	404	1,445	941	28,767	
24 Adjusted Revenue Requirement (FY 24 adj)	(381)	201	17	(199)	(347)	(165)	(874)	
25 Total Adjusted Revenue Requirement	11,826	13,750	237	204	1,098	777	27,892	
26 Volume (KAF)	18.8	21.9	0.3	0.5	0.7	0.6	42.8	
27 Revenue Requirement (\$ per AF)	\$ 629	\$ 627	\$ 846	\$ 426	\$ 1,569	\$ 1,294		
28 Adjustments for Agricultural Preservation								
29 Allocate WU 1% Ad Valorem Prop Tax	-	(11,636)	-	-	-	-	(11,636)	
30 Transfer GF 1% Ad valorem Prop Tax	-	(547)	-	(74)	-	(365)	(986)	
31 Transfer WS 1% Ad Valorem Prop Tax	-	(547)	-	(74)	-	(365)	(986)	
32 Revenue Requirement (\$ per AF)	\$ 629	\$ 47	\$ 846	\$ 120	\$ 1,569	\$ 77		
33 Adjustments to Facilitate Conjunctive Use								
34 Reallocate TW/SW/RW costs	677	-	(30)	-	(646)	-	-	
35 Water Charge (\$ per AF)	\$ 665.50	\$ 46.50	\$ 738.50	\$ 119.50	\$ 645.50	\$ 76.85		
36 Total Revenue (\$K)	\$12,503	\$1,020	\$207	\$57	\$452	\$46	\$14,285	

Exhibit 9, continued **Cost of Service South County Zone W-7 (\$K)**

FY 27 Projection (\$ in Thousands)	Zone W-7				Total W-7
	Groundwater		Surface Water		
	M&I	AG	M&I	AG	
1 Operating Outlays					
2 Operations/Operating Projects	7,925	1,894	160	236	10,216
3 SWP Imported Water Costs	-	-	-	-	-
4 Debt Service	-	-	-	-	-
5 Total Operating Outlays	7,925	1,894	160	236	10,216
6 Capital & Transfers					
7 Operating Transfers Out	-	-	-	-	-
8 Capital Outlays excl. carryforward	-	-	-	-	-
9 Total Capital & Transfers	-	-	-	-	-
10 Total Annual Program Costs	7,925	1,894	160	236	10,216
11 Revenue Requirement Offsets	Step 3 - Allocate costs to customer classes				
12 Capital Cost Recovery	3,620	917	23	34	4,594
13 Debt Proceeds	-	-	-	-	-
14 Inter-governmental Services	(60)	(15)	(0)	(1)	(76)
15 SWP Property Tax	(291)	(74)	(2)	(3)	(370)
16 South County Deficit/Reserve	2,379	105	(114)	4	2,373
17 Interest Earnings	-	-	-	-	-
18 Inter-zone Interest	(22)	(6)	(0)	(0)	(28)
19 Capital Contributions	-	-	-	-	-
20 Perchlorate Response	(4)	(1)	(0)	(0)	(5)
21 Other	(23)	(6)	(0)	(0)	(29)
22 Reserve Requirements	-	-	-	-	-
23 Adjusted Revenue Requirement (FY 27)	13,523	2,815	66	271	16,675
24 Adjusted Revenue Requirement (FY 24 adj)	(2,001)	(591)	117	(264)	(2,738)
25 Total Adjusted Revenue Requirement	11,522	2,224	183	7	13,937
26 Volume (KAF)	12.7	3.2	0.1	0.1	16.2
27 Revenue Requirement (\$ per AF)	\$ 905	\$ 689	\$ 2,292	\$ 58	
28	Step 5 - Develop unit costs by customer				
29 Allocate WU 1% Ad Valorem Prop Tax	-	-	-	7	7
30 Transfer GF 1% Ad valorem Prop Tax	-	(1,037)	-	-	(1,037)
31 Transfer WS 1% Ad Valorem Prop Tax	-	(1,037)	-	-	(1,037)
32 Revenue Requirement (\$ per AF)	\$ 905	\$ 47	\$ 2,292	\$ 120	
33 Adjustments to Facilitate Conjunctive Use	Step 6 - Rate Design				
34 Reallocate TW/SW/RW costs	104	-	(104)	-	-
35 Water Charge (\$ per AF)	\$ 913.00	\$ 46.50	\$ 986.00	\$ 119.50	
36 Total Revenue (\$K)	\$11,627	\$150	\$79	\$14	\$11,870

Exhibit 9, continued **Cost of Service South County Zone W-8 (\$K)**

FY 27 Projection (\$ in Thousands)	Zone W-8				Total W-8	Total South County
	Groundwater		Surface Water			
	M&I	AG	M&I	AG		
1 Operating Outlays						
2 Operations/Operating Projects	259	293	23	-	575	31,904
3 SWP Imported Water Costs	-	-	-	-	-	-
4 Debt Service	-	-	-	-	-	-
5 Total Operating Outlays	259	293	23	-	575	31,904
6 Capital & Transfers						
7 Operating Transfers Out	-	-	-	-	-	-
8 Capital Outlays excl. carryforward	-	-	-	-	-	-
9 Total Capital & Transfers	-	-	-	-	-	-
10 Total Annual Program Costs	259	293	23	-	575	31,904
11 Revenue Requirement Offsets						
12 Capital Cost Recovery	20	22	2	-	44	11,745
13 Debt Proceeds	-	-	-	-	-	-
14 Inter-governmental Services	(0)	(0)	(0)	-	(0)	(152)
15 SWP Property Tax	(15)	(17)	(2)	-	(34)	(1,680)
16 South County Deficit/Reserve	(103)	14	1	-	(88)	4,503
17 Interest Earnings	-	-	-	-	-	-
18 Inter-zone Interest	(1)	(1)	(0)	-	(1)	(105)
19 Capital Contributions	-	-	-	-	-	-
20 Perchlorate Response	(2)	(2)	(0)	-	(5)	(113)
21 Other	(1)	(1)	(0)	-	(2)	(171)
22 Reserve Requirements	-	-	-	-	-	-
23 Adjusted Revenue Requirement (FY 27)	157	307	25	-	489	45,930
24 Adjusted Revenue Requirement (FY 24 adj)	28	49	-	(26)	52	(3,561)
25 Total Adjusted Revenue Requirement	185	356	25	(26)	541	42,370
26 Volume (KAF)	0.4	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.8	59.8
27 Revenue Requirement (\$ per AF)	\$ 496	\$ 847	\$ 618	\$ -		
28						
29 Allocate WU 1% Ad Valorem Prop Tax	-	(7)	-	-	(7)	(11,636)
30 Transfer GF 1% Ad valorem Prop Tax	-	(165)	-	13	(152)	(2,175)
31 Transfer WS 1% Ad Valorem Prop Tax	-	(165)	-	13	(152)	(2,175)
32 Revenue Requirement (\$ per AF)	\$ 496	\$ 47	\$ 618	\$ 120		
33 Adjustments to Facilitate Conjunctive Use						
34 Reallocate TW/SW/RW costs	2	-	(2)	-	-	-
35 Water Charge (\$ per AF)	\$ 501.00	\$ 46.50	\$ 574.00	\$ 119.50		
36 Total Revenue (\$K)	\$187	\$20	\$23	\$0	\$229	\$26,385

Open Space Credit

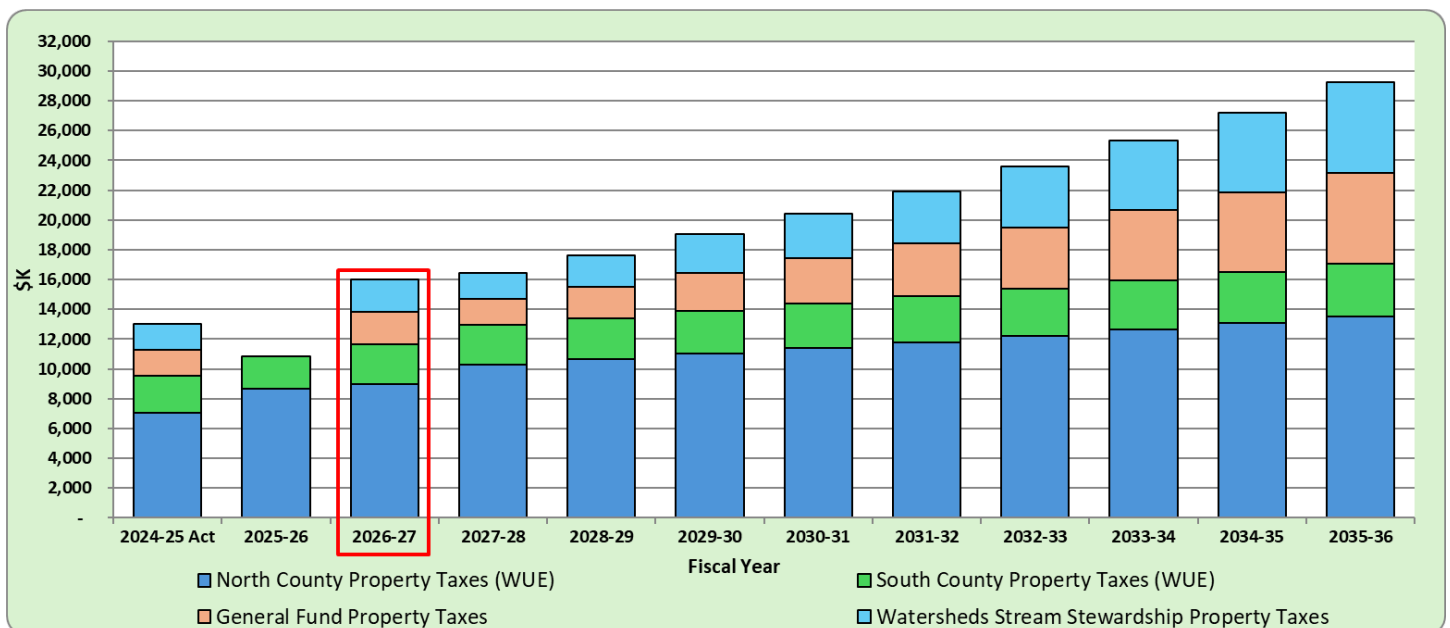
The District Act limits agricultural groundwater production charges to a maximum of 25% of the M&I groundwater production charges. Current board policy adds an “open space” credit to agricultural revenues. The purpose of the credit is to preserve the open space benefits provided by agricultural lands by keeping agricultural groundwater production charges low. While the Supreme Court found Proposition 218 inapplicable to groundwater production charges, the Court determined that Proposition 26 does apply, which means that in order for the groundwater production charge to qualify as a nontax fee, costs to end users must be proportional such that one class of users is not subsidizing another.

The agricultural community currently benefits from low groundwater charges that are 1.7% of M&I charges in North County Zone W-2, 7.0% of M&I charges in South County Zone W-5, and 5.1% of M&I charges in South County Zone W-7. The current FY 2025-26 agricultural groundwater production charge is \$43.00/AF, or 9.25% of the South County Zone W-8 M&I charge of \$464/AF. The FY 2026-27 proposed agricultural groundwater production charge is 9.25% of M&I for Zone W-8, or an increase from \$43.00/AF in FY 2025-26 to \$46.50/AF in FY 2026-27, translating to an increase of up to \$0.58 per month per acre, assuming 2 (two) acre-feet of water usage per acre per year.

The credit to agricultural water users has become known as an “Open Space Credit.” It is paid for by fungible, non-rate related revenue. To offset lost revenue that results from the difference between the adopted agricultural groundwater production charge and the agricultural charge that would have resulted at the full cost of service, Valley Water redirects a portion of the 1% ad valorem property taxes generated in the Water Utility, General and Watershed Stream Stewardship Funds.

To comply with the current agricultural groundwater production charge setting policy, staff recommends the open space credit received by South County be \$16 million in FY 2026-27 (funded by 1% ad valorem property taxes). This incorporates an adjustment that reconciles FY 2023-24 actuals against what was projected for that year. The \$16 million is comprised of an \$8.9 million transfer from North County Water Utility 1% ad valorem property taxes, a \$2.7 million transfer from South County Water Utility 1% ad valorem property taxes, and \$2.175 million transfer from both the General Fund and the Watersheds Stream Stewardship Fund % ad valorem property taxes. As shown in Exhibit 10, the Open Space Credit is projected to grow to \$29.0 million by FY 2034-35.

Exhibit 10 Open Space Credit Trend



Hearings and Meetings Schedule

Exhibit 11 presents the schedule for the annual groundwater production charge setting process.

Exhibit 11 Hearings and Meetings Schedule – 2026

Date	Hearing/Meeting
January 5	Agricultural Water Advisory Committee Meeting
January 13	Board Meeting: Preliminary Groundwater Charge Analysis
January 21	Water Retailers Meeting: Preliminary Groundwater Charge Analysis
January 28	Water Commission Meeting: Prelim Groundwater Charge Analysis
February 10	Board Meeting: Set time and place of Public Hearing
February 27	Mail notice of public hearing and file PAWS report
March 10	Board Meeting: Budget development update
March 11	Water Retailers Meeting: FY 27 Groundwater Charge Recommendation
April 6	Agricultural Water Advisory Committee Meeting
April 8	Water Commission Meeting
April 14	Open Public Hearing
April 22	Continue Public Hearing (Informational Open House with South County focus)
April 28	Conclude Public Hearing
April 29-30	Board Meeting: Budget work study session
May 12	Adopt Biennial Budget & Groundwater Production and Other Water Charges