

# THE ACWD AQUEDUCT

News and Information for the Customers of the Alameda County Water District

Rainbow Lake, Fremont



## Message from the General Manager

Getting safe, clean water to you is not only an engineering and scientific feat, but it can also be a costly one. Like just about everything these days, the cost of acquiring water, moving it to the Tri-Cities, treating it, storing it, and getting it to your faucet, fire hydrant, garden hoses, sprinklers and elsewhere is going up. Although we operate quite differently than local businesses and the average household, we too feel the economic pinch.

You'll read in this newsletter about the rate increase effective March 1. The modest increases are necessary to maintain the current standard of service without delaying projects. We're a 24-hour-a-day, seven-days-a-week operation with a highly specialized staff. This rate increase will help keep our continuous operation humming smoothly, retain our top-notch employees, fund critical projects, and much more.

The ACWD staff and Board of Directors aim to keep the District a forward-looking organization; a consistent theme during our more than 110 years of operation. We're always looking for cost-saving strategies, improving operational efficiencies, and modernizing our existing infrastructure to be better prepared for the future. These efforts have kept our water rates consistently in the lower third of 30 Bay Area water agencies.

This newsletter also provides a window into ACWD's complex water distribution system. The article shares how water moves its way to ACWD, through water treatment processes, and the mostly invisible network of storage reservoirs and tanks, mains and pipes. You will also meet one of our Public Affairs Specialists who helps communicate the latest ACWD news to the community.

Thank you for your continued trust and support of the people who work hard every day to serve you.

Ed Stevenson, General Manager



## ACWD Board Adopts 4% Rate Increase

The ACWD Board of Directors approved on February 13, a two-year water rate increase of 4% to the bimonthly service and commodity charges and updates to drought surcharges and private fire service rates. The new rates took effect on March 1, 2025, and will again on March 1, 2026.

It's no secret that costs keep rising in nearly every sector and for every product or good worldwide. The work it takes for ACWD to deliver safe, clean water to our roughly 342,000 customers is not immune from current economic pressures, and these rate increases reflect that reality.

The water rates and fees you pay cover the cost of providing a reliable supply of high-quality drinking water to the Tri-City area. ACWD faces higher costs these next couple of years to meet stricter water quality and environmental regulations, higher construction and maintenance costs for critical infrastructure, new water supply initiatives, debt coverage and to retain ACWD's talented and specialized workforce.

The District's critical services are funded primarily from the rates and fees you pay. As a public agency, ACWD cannot take in funds beyond the cost of providing services. There are no profits to be made, and all services must be funded annually. If the rate increases had not been adopted, the District would have had to delay projects, lower or minimize some water purchases, and/or take on more debt in the short term.

How much a bill increases still depends on how much water is used. For example, the average residential customer currently uses about 16 units of water, or about 200 gallons per day, during an every-other-month billing cycle. This typical bimonthly bill would rise by \$5.75, or \$2.88 per month, beginning March 1, 2025.

In addition, fixed service charges were increased by the Board, which are dependent on a property's meter size. Service charges help pay for the many fixed costs such as meter maintenance, customer service assistance, but mostly to maintain more than 930 miles of pipeline, and infrastructure investments.

Drought surcharges were raised as well, however these are not currently in effect and would only be implemented if water supplies are insufficient to meet customer water demands due to a Board-declared emergency, such as a drought.

Bills that overlap the 2025 and 2026 effective dates will be prorated and will reflect the changes to applicable charges. For more information, visit [acwd.org/rates](https://acwd.org/rates).

## Added Flexibility

**Sign up for e-Billing:** Simplify your life with e-Billing! Access your bills anytime, reduce paper waste, receive automatic payment reminders, and more. For convenient and eco-friendly billing, sign up or log in at [portal.acwd.org](https://portal.acwd.org).



## The People of ACWD



Renee G.  
Public Affairs Specialist

Born in the Tri-City area and a lifelong love of being near water, Renee seemed destined to come “home” and work on all things water at ACWD.

**What was your connection to the Tri-Cities before joining ACWD?** I grew up in Union City and I’m a proud James Logan High School Colt! My grandfather and dad would take me to Alameda Creek, Niles Canyon, and local ponds to go fishing. I would also bike around the creek trail, and hunt for tadpoles. Before coming to ACWD, I worked for 15 years as a student life coordinator at Ohlone College. Working with student government, clubs, and putting on special events prepared me for the work I do with ACWD. Relationship building with partners was important and that’s been a helpful skill at ACWD which values engagement with the communities it serves. Locally, I also had a childhood filled with years and years of water appreciation. I loved to swim and briefly was on the JLHS swim team. My mom’s family is from Hawaii, and I still love snorkeling, swimming, paddle boarding, kayaking, and more.

**Describe your position and what is a typical workday like?** I do community engagement and outreach, create digital and printed materials, staff community events, run our social media accounts, lead facility tours and oversee the water education program. Public Affairs simplifies technical information to plain language, so my work requires thought and creativity so that what we disseminate is relevant and helpful. Every day is different, and our team is fortunate to observe every aspect of ACWD so we can tell the District’s many stories. One morning, I might be working on social media posts, shift to a water education program assignment a bit later, followed by a community outreach event that evening.

**What is something that people might not know about you?** I’m extremely allergic to most animals, so our family has a lot of wet pets. We have two fancy fantail goldfish, Cutie and Sprinkle, and their five aquatic companions, a band of Gold Inca snails. They all live together in peaceful harmony in a temperature-controlled outdoor environment. This is one more connection I have to water!



### Give your Home a Spring Sprinkler Spruce Up

Spring is around the corner and that means weather patterns will soon change. If you have an irrigation system, it’s time to consider a spring sprinkler spruce up. Take a few moments to check your irrigation systems for any issues that could have occurred during the winter and review this checklist to get you started:



Person installing a new sprinkler head.

- Does your controller have power and a back-up battery?
- Do the sprinklers turn on and off as programmed?
- Is your controller programmed appropriately for landscape areas?
- After running sprinklers, is there any pooling of water?
- Ensure your controller is programmed to run in the early mornings or evenings as best practices.
- Look for broken, clogged, buried, or missing sprinkler heads.
- Look for leaks where the sprinkler heads connect to pipes or hoses.
- Ensure sprinklers only water landscaping and do not over spray onto other surfaces.

Give your irrigation system the ultimate spruce up by installing a smart irrigation controller. Purchase a Rachio 3 Smart Sprinkler Controller at a discounted price or receive a rebate for installing another WaterSense certified smart irrigation controller. Learn more about ACWD’s rebates, tips, tools, and more ways to save money and conserve water around your home by visiting [acwd.org/rebates](http://acwd.org/rebates).



### Water’s Unseen Journey to your Faucet

How drinking water gets to the homes, offices, schools, and fire hydrants of Fremont, Newark, and Union City is a mostly unseen, complex process fueled by a highly connected underground network of drinking water pipelines. ACWD water originates from multiple sources, but before being supplied to 342,000 customers, all source water supplies are treated to meet and surpass state and federal drinking water standards. On average, ACWD produces 34 million gallons of drinking water a day.

After treatment, water makes its way into the vast distribution system network made up of pipes, valves, pumps, tanks, and reservoirs. Larger pipes, known as transmission mains, get the water moving out into the cities before they branch off into smaller distribution pipes that have connections to homes, businesses, schools, and fire hydrants. Excess water not used immediately, is stored in one of the District’s 13 drinking water storage facilities for later use and to provide consistent pressure for the distribution system.

Water service lines run from the distribution pipes to individual buildings, passing through meters to track usage that ultimately result in billing. When a faucet is turned on, water flows due to system pressure maintained by water levels in tanks and reservoirs at higher elevations. Pressure is critical for a functioning water system.

Fire hydrants share our same drinking water system and are always under pressure for immediate use in firefighting. Fire hydrants are also sometimes used for other authorized purposes, including providing water to street sweepers, construction sites, and cleaning water mains. The pressure of water to a home or hydrant varies according to its elevation in relation to the closest tank or reservoir, pump station, or water pressure regulating valve.

Booster pump stations help move water to higher elevations and higher-pressure zones, which provide appropriate pressure and supply for that area. This approach ensures that ACWD’s high-quality water is supplied at quantities and pressures tailored to the needs of the homes and businesses throughout the Tri-Cities. Learn more about ACWD’s water supply sources at [acwd.org/yourwater](http://acwd.org/yourwater).