

From: Nickola Frye <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Monday, July 31, 2023 8:28 PM
To: Jessica Medina <jmedina@cityofpetaluma.org>
Subject: Water/Wastewater fee increase

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Jessica:

Thank you for providing me your email address and suggesting that I let you know some concerns I have and which I expressed at the Zoom meeting on Monday evening, July 31, 2023.

As a retired engineer, I understand the need to increase fees for water/wastewater, but I am seriously concerned about the burden these increases will place on Petaluma seniors and families who live on limited incomes.

Utilizing the facts and figures provided by the Public Works Department I took some time to look at how the Sept 1 increase would affect a single household at various income levels if that household utilized the lowest level of water/wastewater (please see attached jpg chart). In addition, this is only the first of five increases over the next five years, each of which will significantly affect the ability of many seniors and families to continue to reside in Petaluma.

I have the LIHWAP application, but as I explained I am very hesitant to apply as I feel that the personal information that they require is inappropriate and because the application includes the following admonishments:

"ALL INCOMPLETE APPLICATION WILL BE DENIED!!!"

"*****THIS IS NOT A GUARANTEED PROGRAM*****"

I would very much like to have a meeting scheduled with the Public Works Department, the City Manager, the City Council members, or any persons that you would suggest that would recognize that the low income residents of Petaluma, particularly those that live in mobile home parks or those living in other situations where the water/wastewater fees are passed through from owners, have been or will be adversely affected by the proposed water/wastewater increases.

Thank you for your assistance and consideration in this important matter.

Nickola Frye
Board Secretary, Rebuilding Together Petaluma
Secretary, City of Petaluma Senior Advisory Committee
[REDACTED]

My name is Nickola Frye and I am on the Petaluma Senior Advisory Committee, and the board of Rebuilding Together Petaluma. I am also the past president of the Petaluma Estates Mobile Home Park HOA, and I deliver Meals on Wheels two days a week. During all of my volunteer activities I have conversations with seniors and other low income Petalumans daily.

Today, I stand before you to raise my voice against the proposed water & wastewater rate increases, which threatens to burden those living on limited incomes. Water is a basic necessity, an essential element of life, and it is our responsibility to ensure it remains accessible to everyone.

Increasing these rates may seem like a small change for some, but for many in our community who are already struggling to make ends meet, it will create a significant financial hardship. The reality is that those on limited incomes often have to make difficult choices between basic needs like food, shelter, and medical care. Adding an extra burden through higher water bills is simply unfair and can have dire consequences.

Simple example of actual cost to water/wastewater usage per Sept 1, 2023 rate increase

MONTHLY WATER COST	WATER COST +rate increase	YEARLY INCREASE	MEDIAN INCOME \$89,650	LOW INCOME \$70,500	VERY LOW INCOME \$44,050	EXTREMELY LOW \$26,450	ACUTELY LOW \$13,450
\$31.91	\$39.15	\$86.88	.097%	.123%	.197%	.328%	.646%
MONTHLY SEWER COST	SEWER COST +rate increase	YEARLY INCREASE	MEDIAN INCOME \$89,650	LOW INCOME \$70,500	VERY LOW INCOME \$44,050	EXTREMELY LOW \$26,450	ACUTELY LOW \$13,450
\$82.88	\$87.10	\$53.16	.059%	.075	.121%	.201	.395%
MONTHLY TOTAL COST	TOTAL COST +rate increase	YEARLY INCREASE	MEDIAN INCOME \$89,650	LOW INCOME \$70,500	VERY LOW INCOME \$44,050	EXTREMELY LOW \$26,450	ACUTELY LOW \$13,450
\$114.79	\$126.25	\$140.04	.156%	.199%	.318%	.530%	1.041%

Furthermore, we must remember that not everyone has the luxury of reducing their water consumption to save money. Families with young

children, the elderly, and those with medical conditions may have no choice but to use more water.

I have a walk-in tub to help ease the growing effect of my disability, and have been prescribed its daily use by my physician. But, because of the current cost of water & wastewater I limit my use to once every seven to ten days. Increasing these rates disproportionately affects the most vulnerable among us, deepening the inequalities that already exist.

I am aware of the alternative solution to the rates for Petalumas who live on a low income. I received the eight page application to apply for a reduction, but found that I was uncomfortable completing it since it required me to include race, gender, birthdate, and provide a copy of my driver's license and my social security number among other information. I'm not sure what my race and gender have to do with receiving reduced water rates.

I previously applied for and received help through the PG&E CARE and their Medical Baseline Programs. Their application was simple and straightforward to do. In addition, I applied and received Recology's 25% reduction of fees. I was simply required to send in a copy of my space rent bill showing that I qualified for CARE. Perhaps the City of Petaluma could do something similar to qualify Petalumas for a water rate reduction.

My current space rent bill including PG&E and City of Petaluma Water & Sewer amounts. Other charges (Water Admin Fee, Trash) are amounts added to the notice by the management company, even though I pay directly to Recology for my own trash. Current total for Water & Sewer is \$61.36 for 3CCF of Water and for Sewer and Sewer Service Charge.

BILL FOR		Aug 2023	No	55				
FROM		UTILITY READINGS	FROM	TO	DIFF	ENERGY UNITS	CHARGE	
PETALUMA ESTATES		GAS	CuFtx100	3386	3394	8	9	11.89
901 NORTH MCDOWELL		ELE	KWH	90781	90941	160	160	35.13
PETALUMA CA 94954-1322		WAT	CuFtx100	23	26	3		25.76
		WATER ADMIN FEE						3.59
TO		Rent						840.76
Nickola Frye #55		TRASH						11.07
63 West Napa Drive		SEWER						33.36
Petaluma, CA 94954		SWR SRV CH						32.24
ACCOUNT 90100055		GAS MULTIPLIER 1.08021		PLEASE PAY TOTAL		\$993.80		
RENT DUE ON THE FIRST AND LATE AFTER 4PM ON THE SIXTH OF THE MONTH. IF YOU HAVE ANY PROBLEMS CALL THE OFFICE. PAID / / AMT= RECD BY ADJ TOT								
UTILITY DETAIL								
GAS		13.72						
9.00 Therms		@ 1.548254						13.93
CARE DISCOUNT								2.79CR
9 PPP Exp		@ 0.062548						0.56
CPUC Inspection chg.								0.19
ELECTRIC		Baseline 274.40KWH						
CARE allowance		@ 0.337144						53.94
160.00 KW-hrs		Baseline						18.86CR
CARE DISCOUNT								
160 CERS Exp.		@ 0.000300						0.05
WATER		SERVICE CHG		\$11.39				
3 CCF		@ 4.790000		14.37		BILLING DAYS=28		
Cubic Feet Water Meter								

I urge you to consider the social implications of this decision. The proposed water & wastewater rate increases would exacerbate the already widening gap between the haves and the have-nots, pushing more families into financial distress and potential crisis.

In conclusion, I implore you to reconsider the proposed rate increases and take into account the impact it will have on those living on limited incomes. Let us prioritize the well-being of all our citizens and build a more equitable and compassionate community for generations to come.

-----Original Message-----

From: Nickola Frye [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, August 5, 2023 12:33 PM
To: Bolt, Christopher <cbolt@cityofpetaluma.org>
Subject: Notices regarding water/wastewater rates

---Warning: Use caution before clicking any attachments. THIS EMAIL IS FROM OUTSIDE OUR EMAIL SYSTEM.---

Hello:

I personally wanted to thank you for spending your time and position to deliver the notices regarding the water/wastewater rate increases to the mobile home parks.

When I expressed my concerns at the zoom meeting, I was unsure what and if anything could happen. Please know that you and your departments response is greatly appreciated. I felt that my words were heard and that my opinion really mattered.

Do you think that anything can be done to streamline the application process so seniors and low income households will feel that can safely apply for a reduction in their rates? I will be bringing the application to the city council meeting, in addition to sending in my written comments, so that they will understand the issues which have arisen from this unfriendly process.

Again thanks for responding in such a positive manner, you are greatly appreciated.

Nickola Frye
Secretary, Petaluma Senior Advisory Committee Board Secretary, Rebuilding Together Petaluma

[REDACTED]