



Santa Clarita Valley Water Agency

Wholesale Water Rate Study February 2022

Providing responsible water stewardship to ensure the Santa Clarita Valley has reliable supplier of high-quality water at a reasonable cost

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	1
Current Rates.....	1
Proposed Rates	2
Rate Design	3
Water Demand in Acre Feet (AF).....	4
Variable Operating Expenditures	5
Water Rate Revenue Requirement.....	6
Fixed Costs	7
Fixed Cost Allocation Methodology	7
Fixed Operating Expenditures Breakdown	9
Revenue Offsets	12
Financial Results Forecast.....	13
Recommendation.....	14

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Current Wholesale Water Rates	1
Table 2: Wholesale Water Rate Fixed Charge Costs by Function.....	2
Table 3: Wholesale Water Rate Variable Charge Costs by Function	3
Table 4: Projected Water Sales in Acre Feet.....	4
Table 5: Functional Variable Cost Components	5
Table 6: Retail Revenue Cost of Service Non-Operating Revenue Offset	6
Table 7: Total Purchased Power Cost for the Agency	6
Table 8: Fixed Costs by Function (O&M and Capital).....	7
Table 9: Agency Revenues available for reducing retail and wholesale rates	12
Table 10: Projected Wholesale Water Rates for Calendar Years 2022-2026.....	13
Table 11: Operating and Capital Improvement Costs Allocated to Wholesale Water Rates	14
Table 12: Proposed Wholesale Water Rates.....	14

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Water Quality and Treatment.....	9
Figure 2: Customer Accounts	9
Figure 3: Water Resources	9
Figure 4: Administrative and General	10
Figure 5: Water Treatment, Transmission and Distribution CIP Projects.....	11

LIST OF CHARTS

Chart 1: Actual and Projected Wholesale Gross Revenues with Current Rate Structure	1
Chart 2: Historical Water Sales to District 36.....	4

INTRODUCTION

The existing wholesale water rates were approved by the Board on November 20, 2017. Based on the rate design, which in part relied on a multi-year average of imported water purchases to recover a portion of fixed costs, wholesale water revenues from Los Angeles County Waterworks District 36 have declined over the past several years and are projected to continue to decline. Recognizing the need to fairly apportion the costs for wholesale services, including the standby value of the SCV Water delivery facilities and supply, staff prepared an updated cost analysis to derive a new proposed wholesale rate structure. The structure consists of a monthly fixed charge, and a variable charge for each acre foot of water purchased.

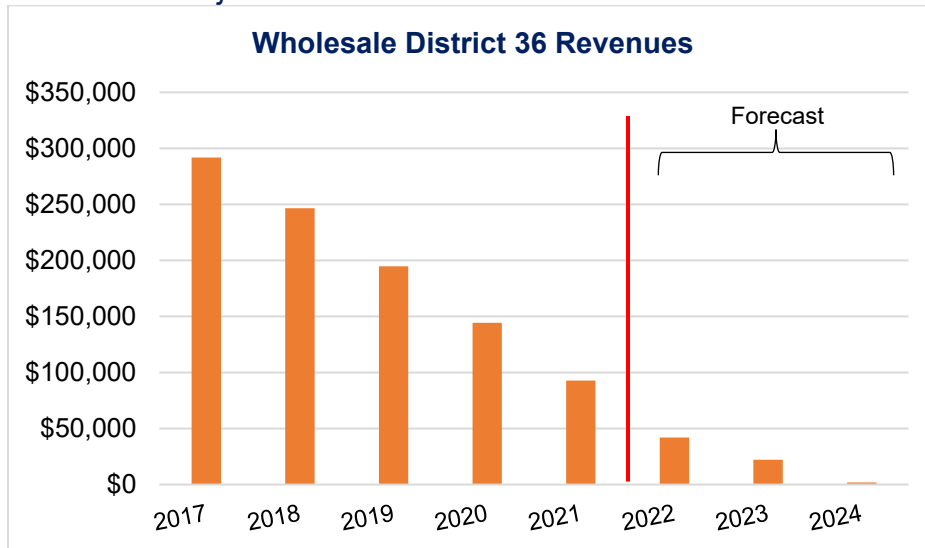
CURRENT RATES

Current rates for Calendar Year (“CY”) 2021 and 2022 are shown in Table 1 below. These rates were calculated based on a detailed water rate study dated March 16, 2016.

Table 1: Current Wholesale Water Rates

Current Wholesale Water Rates		
Calendar Year	Annual Fixed Charge	Variable Rate per AF
2021	\$92,849	\$242.92
2022	\$42,528	\$250.21

Chart 1: Actual and Projected Wholesale Gross Revenues with Current Rate Structure



PROPOSED RATES

This 2022 Wholesale Water Rate analysis conducted by staff follows the same methodology of cost functionalization as was used in the recently completed retail rate study. Functions are major groupings of many different types of costs that result in an output such as water quality and treatment. Table 2 contains a list of the Agency’s wholesale water functions. Functionalized costs were reviewed and only those costs applicable to wholesale water service were included in this study. Since the merger of water agencies in the Santa Clarita Valley, only District 36 remains as a wholesale customer of the Agency. As a result, the total amount of wholesale cost recovery is much smaller than in past wholesale water rate studies. The wholesale water rate structure is designed to meet the following Agency objectives:

- ◆ Ensure financial sufficiency by meeting the operation and maintenance (O&M) costs, and capital replacement and improvement costs, associated with maintaining the readiness to serve District 36, and the supply of high-quality water that may be requested by District 36
- ◆ Encourage efficient use and conservation of water by establishing a rate design framework consistent with the cost-of-service guidelines used in the industry that adequately and fairly distributes the full cost of service to customers of the Agency based on the demand they place on the Agency’s system
- ◆ Recover the customer billing costs associated with providing wholesale water service

New rates were developed by staff and reviewed by the Ratepayer Advocate. This report serves as the documentation for the analysis. The new rate structure includes two components:

- ◆ The **Fixed Charge** is a monthly charge designed to recover the costs of the Agency maintaining its readiness to serve District 36 at any time for up to the full capacity of the turnouts that connect District 36 to the Agency. For the Agency to be able to provide this service, costs of water quality and treatment facilities, and associated personnel salaries and benefits, laboratory and testing costs, regulatory fees, and professional services were included. In addition, customer account costs including billing, salaries and benefits were allocated; water resources costs comprised of personnel salaries and benefits, water acquisition costs, and the water shortage contingency plan were included. Also included in the fixed charge are portions of the water treatment capital improvement plan (structures and plants) and transmission and distribution transmission mains capital improvements. Table 2 summarizes these costs originated from the Agency budget.

Table 2: Wholesale Water Rate Fixed Charge Costs by Function

Function	Fixed Cost
Water Quality & Treatment	\$ 48,923
Customer Accounts	\$ 30
Administrative and General	\$ 150,131
Water Resources	\$ 86,914
Water Treatment-Structures & Plant	\$ 3,634
Transmission & Distribution -Transmission Mains	\$ 2,706
Total	\$ 292,338

- The **Variable Charge** recovers the cost per acre foot of water sold to District 36. This charge includes cost recovery of the source of water supply which includes the Buena Vista/Rosedale Rio Bravo (BV/RRB) supply and other banking programs; purchased power costs for operating the water treatment plant, cost of chemicals for water treatment, and public outreach & communication of water efficiency, and conservation program costs. Table 3 summarizes these costs by Function. Additional detail of these cost functions is shown in Table 3 and Table 5.

Table 3: Wholesale Water Rate Variable Charge Costs by Function

Function	Variable Cost Per ccf
Source of Supply	\$ 0.28
Purchase Power	\$ 0.02
Water Quality & Treatment	\$ 0.05
Water Resources	\$ 0.13
Total	\$ 0.48

In cases of state-mandated reduction in water usage, the Agency may reduce the amount of water made available to District 36 by the mandated reduction percentage, consistent with the Agency’s adopted Water Shortage Contingency Plan and Ordinance.

Per American Water Works Association (AWWA) M1 Manual “The rates may be “unbundled” into the various components of supply, treatment, transmission, distribution storage, and so on. By unbundling the utility’s rates, the various components that are relevant to the standby service can be consolidated into a standby rate.”

RATE DESIGN

The rates were calculated using procedures described in the AWWA's M1 Manual, Stand-by-Charges, for determining wholesale water rates. It is important to remember that there is no "one-size-fits-all" approach to establishing cost-based water rates when developing wholesale water rates, the M1 Manual is aimed at outlining the basic elements involved in wholesale water rates and suggesting alternative rules of procedure for formulating rates, thus allowing the exercise of judgment and preference to meet local conditions and requirements.

To ensure rate equity, a customer should be required to bear any direct costs incurred to provide the service interconnection as well as the maintenance of that interconnection. In providing the readiness to serve, there are generally two types of rates to fairly collect the costs associated with reserving capacity and then the use of that capacity. First, the customer is assessed a fixed demand charge to recover the costs of providing standby or reserved capacity. This charge is billed to the customer regardless of the amount of water consumed. Once a customer consumes water on a standby basis, a consumption charge is applied for all water consumed. By using both rate components, this will ensure that the customer is not subsidized by other customers.

The analysis used data from the Agency’s 2021 retail cost-of-service and water-rate study, which is the most recent data available.

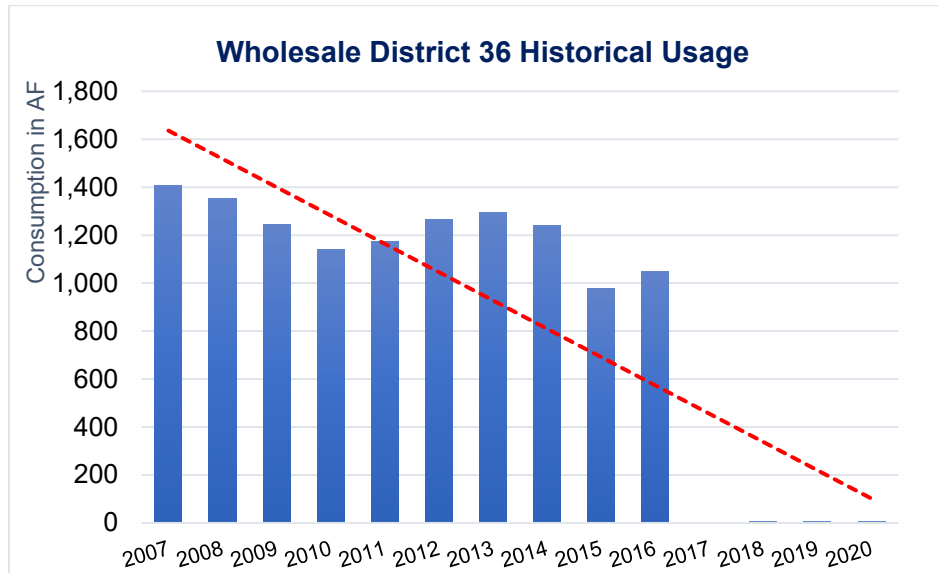
Water Demand in acre feet AF

The water supply and demand are expressed in acre feet (AF). The acre feet forecast in Table 4 is based on a number of components, including population growth projections from the Santa Clarita Economic Development Corporation (Data (scvedc.org)), as well as legal obligations for lower consumption. Table 4 shows the forecasted volumes in the current cost-of-service study.

Table 4: Projected Water Sales in Acre Feet

Projected Sales in AF				
	2021	2022	2023	2024
SCV Water Agency	58,636	58,810	58,940	59,073
L.A. County WWD #36	-	-	-	-
Total Projected Sales in AF	58,636	58,810	58,940	59,073

Chart 2: Historical Water Sales to District 36



Under the existing rate structure, wholesale revenues from District 36 are forecast to continue to decline as shown in Chart 2. This is because the fixed rate was set to recover 80% of the fixed costs of water that was actually sold to its wholesale customers. Now that the Agency has only a single wholesale customer, and that customer has significantly changed the amounts of water it purchases from the Agency, this rate design no longer performs as intended.

Variable Operating Expenditures

Table 5 breaks down the cost functions identified in Table 2 and includes the total cost of these items (attributable to the sum of wholesale and retail driven costs). The \$12,767,336 of total variable cost for these functions were reduced by a non-operating revenue offset of \$659,579 (the amount of non-operating revenues allocated to wholesale service as explained in “Water Rate Revenue Requirement”) to arrive at the Agency’s adjusted variable cost of water for these functions. There are other variable operating costs that do not apply to wholesale water (such as purchased power costs for operating wells and pumping facilities) and these are not shown in this table. Table 7 Total Purchased Power Cost for the Agency shows the full breakdown of the Function “Purchased Power”. The reason for excluding some of the Purchased Power Function’s cost elements is that they are not relevant to Wholesale Water. The costs shown in Table 5 are divided by the full expected number of ccf to be purchased by Agency customers (Retail and Wholesale). The result is the wholesale water variable cost per ccf. The analysis used data from the Agency’s 2021 retail cost-of-service and water-rate study, which was derived from the Agency’s budget and other financial documents and is the most recent data available.

Table 5: Functional Variable Cost Components

Functions	Allocated Variable Cost	Variable Cost per ccf
Source of Supply	\$ 7,501,112	\$ 0.28
<i>Buena Vista/ Rosedale Rio Bravo (BV/RRB) Supply</i>	4,417,409	0.17
<i>Firming Programs</i>	3,083,703	0.11
Purchased Power	\$ 433,867	\$ 0.02
<i>Power Purchased - Treatment Plant</i>	433,867	0.02
Water Quality & Treatment	\$ 1,374,520	\$ 0.05
<i>Chemicals</i>	1,374,520	0.05
Water Resources	\$ 3,457,837	\$ 0.13
<i>Agency Publications</i>	27,753	0.01
<i>Community Relations</i>	159,325	0.01
<i>Public Outreach & Activities</i>	808,555	0.02
<i>Water Efficiency and Conservation</i>	2,462,203	0.09
Total Variable Cost	\$ 12,767,336	\$ 0.48
<i>Revenue Offset</i>	\$ (659,575)	
Total Adjusted Variable Cost	\$ 12,107,761	
Units of Service in ccf	25,617,472	
Variable Cost per ccf	\$0.48	
Variable Cost per AF	\$205.88	

The unit cost formula used to calculate the Variable Cost per ccf is:

$$\text{Variable Cost} = \frac{\text{(Variable Operating Expenditures – Allocated Revenue Offset)}}{\text{Units of Service}}$$

Water Rate Revenue Requirement

To estimate the overall water rate revenue needed, miscellaneous fees, service connections fees, 1% property taxes, communication and rental income, investment revenues, and grants were removed as offsets to operational expenses. Table 6 shows that the Agency’s overall Non-Operating Revenue Offset is \$32,558,931, with a \$1,701,805 offset for the Source of Supply allocated costs.

The variable Wholesale cost-of-service is \$12,767,336 as shown in Table 5, representing 38.76% of the overall Source of Supply O&M costs of \$32,941,760 in Table 6. Using this percentage (38.76%) we derived the revenue offset of \$659,575 shown in Table 5. This is 38.67% of the \$1,701,805 of the non-operating revenue offset for source of supply shown in Table 6.

Table 6: Retail Revenue Cost of Service Non-Operating Revenue Offset

Cost Allocation Summary	Cost of Service	Source of Supply	Base	MDD	PHD	Meters	Customer Service	Public Fire Protection Service
O&M Expense	\$ 77,422,023	\$32,941,760	\$ 22,293,556	\$ 10,076,152	\$ 7,866,263	\$ 547,143	\$ 3,608,334	\$ 88,817
Other Obligations	31,349,791	-	13,022,980	3,871,338	6,129,943	4,177,763	4,113,972	33,795
Non-Operating Revenues Offset	(32,558,931)	(1,701,805)	(13,015,464)	(4,047,280)	(5,990,674)	(3,834,151)	(3,934,183)	(35,375)
Total Revenue Requirements	\$ 76,212,883	\$31,239,955	\$ 22,301,071	\$ 9,900,209	\$ 8,005,532	\$ 890,755	\$ 3,788,124	\$ 87,237

Table 7: Total Purchased Power Cost for the Agency

Purchase Power	Variable
Power Purchased	\$ 69,729
Power Purchased - Pumping	\$ 8,160,827
Power Purchased - Sewer	\$ 10,330
Power Purchased - Treatment Plant*	\$ 433,867
Power Purchased - Wells	\$ 173,547
Total Purchased Power	\$ 8,848,299

*The purchased power cost for operating the water treatment plant is the only cost that is allocated to both wholesale and retail. Other purchase power costs are fully allocated to retail customers.

Fixed Costs

All other operating costs are fixed as they do not vary with the amount of water sales. The Operating and Maintenance (“O&M”) expenses and planned capital improvement, by function and their allocated amounts to wholesale water rates are shown in Table 8. The methodology for allocating these costs to wholesale water rates is described in the table below.

Table 8: Fixed Costs by Function (O&M and Capital)

Functions	Fixed	Allocated to Wholesale Rates
<i>Water Quality and Treatment</i>	\$ 1,160,009	\$ 48,923
<i>Customer Accounts</i>	2,425,388	30
<i>Administrative and General</i>	7,448,115	150,131
<i>Water Resources</i>	4,311,877	86,914
Total O&M Fixed Cost	\$ 15,345,388	285,998

CIP Functions	Fixed	Allocated to Wholesale Rates
<i>Water Treatment -Structures and Plant</i>	\$ 10,934,607	\$ 3,634
<i>T&D-Transmission Mains</i>	8,140,351	2,706
Total CIP Cost	\$ 19,074,957	6,340
Total Fixed Cost	\$ 34,420,345	\$ 292,338

The capital improvement projects (CIP) shown in Table 8, are directly related to wholesale water service.

Fixed Cost Allocation Methodology

The fixed costs are allocated among three categories: Source of Supply, Maximum Day Demand, and Customer Service.

1. Source of Supply which includes the Administrative and General costs
2. Maximum Day Demand (MDD)¹ which includes Water Quality and Treatment, Administrative and General and CIP costs.
3. Customer Service which includes Customer Accounts

¹ *Maximum Day Demand (MDD) – the costs of delivering water to customers on the day with the highest demand*

The first step is to calculate the fixed unit cost.

$\text{Fixed Unit Cost} = \frac{\text{(Fixed Operating Expenditures – Allocated Revenue Offset)}}{\text{Units of Service}}$

The fixed unit cost is then multiplied by the readiness to serve volume.

1. Source of Supply categories:

$$\text{Annual Fixed Cost} = \text{Readiness to Serve Volume} \times \text{Fixed Unit Cost}$$

Readiness to serve volume is based on pre 2017 Ten-Year Historical Usage Average approximately 1,250 Acre Feet per year. Following AWWA capacity standards to scale fixed rates ensures a consistent pricing baseline. Charges for providing District 36 with accessibility to water are classified as "readiness-to-serve" charges. Since they are assessed whether or not water is utilized, they make up a constant amount of District 36' bills.

2. Maximum Day Demand (MDD)¹ categories:

$$\text{Annual Fixed Cost} = \text{Capacity Base} \times \text{Fixed Unit Cost}$$

Capacity base is calculated using the Waterworks District 36 turnout's capacity of 6,600 gallon per minute.

The AWWA guidelines recommend using a 2-to-4-hour multiplier for the capacity requirement when estimating the system's maximum day capacity. In this study, staff chose 3 hours to represent the midpoint of the 2-to-4-hour range. In the end, it comes down to the fire standards that must be met while constructing system infrastructure. The fact of the matter is that the capacity of system infrastructure is far more than the average daily demand placed on the system by users, and the cost of capacity maintenance, repair, and replacement must be recovered fairly from all customers.

$$\text{District 36 Turnouts MDD Capacity} = (6,600 \text{ GPM} \times 60 \text{ mins} \times 3 \text{ hours}) / 748 = 1,588 \text{ CCF/Day}$$

The following section of Tables are showing the detail of costs included in Table 8.

Fixed Operating Expenditures Breakdown

Figure 1: Water Quality and Treatment

Functions	Fixed	Allocated to Wholesale Rates
<i>Water Quality and Treatment - Benefits</i>	\$ 318,015	\$ 13,412
<i>Water Quality and Treatment - Labor</i>	583,315	24,601
<i>Backflow Prevention</i>	213	9
<i>Laboratory Expense</i>	157,946	6,661
<i>Maintenance & Repair - Treatment Equipment</i>	10,719	452
<i>Miscellaneous Expense (testing samples, gases)</i>	33,013	1,392
<i>Professional Services - Outside Services & Consulting</i>	17,015	718
<i>Regulatory Fees</i>	39,773	1,677
Water Quality and Treatment	\$ 1,160,009	\$ 48,923

Figure 2: Customer Accounts

Functions	Fixed	Allocated to Wholesale Rates
<i>Customer Accounts - Benefits</i>	\$ 552,378	\$ 7
<i>Customer Accounts - Labor</i>	1,086,674	14
<i>Billing & Collecting</i>	723,920	9
<i>Uncollectable Accounts</i>	62,416	1
Customer Accounts	\$ 2,425,388	\$ 30

Figure 3: Water Resources

Functions	Fixed	Allocated to Wholesale Rates
<i>DD Landowner Expenditure</i>	\$ 204,980	\$ 4,132
<i>DD Variable DWR Charges</i>	102,490	2,066
<i>Groundwater Sustainability Agency</i>	250,000	5,039
<i>Water Resources - Benefits</i>	706,154	14,234
<i>Water Resources - Labor</i>	1,822,953	36,745
<i>Water Shortage Contingency Plan</i>	20,000	403
<i>Water Acquisition costs- Ventura</i>	20,498	413
<i>Water Acquisition costs- Semi Tropic</i>	84,240	1,698
<i>Water Acquisition costs- BV/RRB</i>	60,000	1,209
<i>Salt and Nutrient Management Plant</i>	100,000	2,016
<i>Annexation Support</i>	50,000	1,008
<i>Grant Administration</i>	200,000	4,031
<i>Professional Services - Outside Services & Consulting</i>	640,563	12,912
<i>Integrated Regional Water Management Plan</i>	50,000	1,008
Water Resources	\$ 4,311,877	\$ 86,914

Figure 4: Administrative and General

Functions	Fixed	Allocated to Wholesale Rates
General & Administrative - Labor	\$ 1,776,854	\$ 35,816
Management - Labor	253,842	5,117
Payroll Taxes (UEI)	2,916	59
General & Administrative - Benefits	895,057	18,042
Management - Benefits	119,601	2,411
Retiree Benefits	191,642	3,863
Earthquake/Flood Insurance	21,871	441
Liability/Property Insurance	486,972	9,816
Parts & Material	43,096	869
Professional Services - Outside Services & Consulting	220,542	4,445
Security/Alarm Services	51,032	1,029
Capital Equipment to CIP	(32,322)	(652)
Dues and Memberships	82,325	1,659
Employee Expense	45,498	917
Employee Travel	45,376	915
Internal Relations	20,673	417
Maintenance & Repair - Office Equipment	21,413	432
Miscellaneous Expenses (bank fees, special projects)	85,704	1,728
Office Supplies	67,203	1,355
Overhead Allocation	(221,481)	(4,464)
Professional Development - Education/Training	132,834	2,678
Professional License/Fees	36,451	735
Professional Services - Accounting	29,886	602
Professional Services - Outside Services & Consulting	220,277	4,440
Publications	6,932	140
Recruitment	10,935	220
Rent/HOA Dues	20,486	413
Safety Training and Equipment	62,462	1,259
Supplies and Services	110,720	2,232
Temporary Personnel	91,582	1,846
Uniforms	43,377	874
Utilities	144,387	2,910
Vehicle Expense (Repairs)	546,222	11,010
Vehicle Operating (Includes Fuel)	73,265	1,477
Director - Benefits	124,528	2,510
Director - Compensation	82,292	1,659
Director - Expenses	49,454	997
Professional Services - Legal	408,035	8,225
Professional Services - Legislative Advocate Services	118,467	2,388
Professional Services - Outside Services & Consulting	63,790	1,286
Computer Support	893,919	18,019
Administrative and General	\$ 7,448,115	\$ 150,131

Figure 5: Water Treatment, Transmission and Distribution CIP Projects

CIP Functions	Fixed	Allocated to Wholesale Rates
<i>Water Treatment - Structures</i>	\$ 508,430	\$ 169
<i>Water Treatment - Plant</i>	10,426,177	3,465
Water Treatment -Structures and Plant	\$ 10,934,607	\$ 3,634
<i>T&D-Transmission Mains</i>	8,140,351	2,706
T&D-Transmission Mains	\$ 8,140,351	\$ 2,706
Total CIP Cost	\$ 19,074,957	\$ 6,340

These capital improvement projects, which are included in the proposed rates, only include projects allocated to wholesale customers.

REVENUE OFFSETS

Revenue offsets are Agency revenues other than retail and wholesale water rate revenues. These revenues are available to offset retail and wholesale water rate revenues. The results are shown in Table 9 below. Table 9 is showing a projected amount of offsets for the future years; actual adjustments will be made based on Consumer Price Index increases.

Table 9: Agency Revenues available for reducing retail and wholesale rates

Revenue Offsets	Budget FY 2021/22	Budget FY 2022/23	Budget FY 2023/24	Budget FY 2024/25
Other operating revenues	\$ 3,999,700	\$ 4,049,697	\$ 4,100,394	\$ 4,151,802
<i>Misc. Fees (Customer Related fees and charges such as late fees, disconnect charges, etc.)</i>	1,000,000	1,020,000	1,040,400	1,061,208
<i>Service Connection/Expansion Fees</i>	2,999,700	3,029,697	3,059,994	3,090,594
Non-operating revenues	\$ 28,559,231	\$ 24,912,679	\$ 21,318,227	\$ 22,198,199
<i>1% Property Tax Revenues</i>	16,417,976	16,647,957	17,597,295	18,411,491
<i>Communication/ Rental Income</i>	509,682	519,876	530,273	540,879
<i>Investment Revenues</i>	1,678,043	1,703,213	1,728,761	1,754,693
<i>Settlement Agreement (CIP)</i>	3,940,000	-	-	-
<i>Settlement Agreement (O&M)</i>	1,405,131	1,433,233	1,461,898	1,491,136
<i>Grants and Reimbursements</i>	1,608,400	1,608,400	-	-
<i>Use of Capacity Fees (Retail)</i>	3,000,000	3,000,000	-	-
Total Revenue Offsets	\$ 32,558,931	\$ 28,962,376	\$ 25,418,621	\$ 26,350,001

FINANCIAL RESULTS FORECAST

Wholesale water rate components (fixed and variable) are based on the actual and projected Agency expenses for providing wholesale water service to its Wholesale Customer, District 36. Annual rate changes will be based on the Consumer Price Index (“CPI”). The assumptions for the table below are that annually, the wholesale rate will increase by 3% due to changes in the CPI, and water usage will be 500 AF in Calendar 2022 and each year after that, usage will increase by 10% each year. Table 10 is a scenario of what rates may look like under these assumptions. This is not a table of what the rates will necessarily be.

Table 10: Projected Wholesale Water Rates for Calendar Years 2022-2026

Wholesale Water Rates					
	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
Annual Rate Increase		3.00%	3.00%	3.00%	3.00%
Proposed Fixed per Year	\$292,338	\$301,108	\$310,141	\$319,446	\$329,029
Proposed Variable per AF	\$205.88	\$212.05	\$218.42	\$224.97	\$231.72
Projected Operating Revenue	\$80,052,122	\$85,487,878	\$91,312,445	\$98,207,437	\$105,644,007
Wholesale Water Usage in AF	500	550	605	666	732
Projected Wholesale Revenue	\$395,277	\$417,738	\$442,283	\$469,162	\$498,658

RECOMMENDATION

The operating and capital improvement costs allocated to wholesale water rates are summarized in Table 11. Both the variable unit cost and fixed cost per function. The result of this cost allocation are the wholesale rates shown in Table 11.

Table 11: Operating and Capital Improvement Costs Allocated to Wholesale Water Rates

		Capacity Base		6,600 GPM			
		Readiness to Serve Volume		1,250 AF			
O&M Functions	Variable Unit Cost	Fixed Unit Cost	Cost Components	Multiplier (Capacity or Usage)	Unit	Total Annual Cost	Total Monthly Cost
Source of Supply	\$0.28						
Purchase Power - Treatment Plant	\$0.02						
Water Quality & Treatment	\$0.05	\$30.80	MDD	1,588	ccf - Turnouts MDD Capacity	\$48,923	\$4,077
Customer Accounts		\$2.52	# of Bills	12	Bills	\$30	\$3
Administrative and General		\$0.28	Source of Supply	544,499	Readiness to Serve Volume	\$150,131	\$12,511
Water Resources	\$0.13	\$0.16	Source of Supply	544,499	Readiness to Serve Volume	\$86,914	\$7,243
\$0.48 ccf						Annual Fixed	\$285,998
\$205.88 per AF						Monthly Fixed	\$23,833
CIP Functions	Variable Unit Cost	Fixed Unit Cost	Cost Components	Multiplier (Capacity or Usage)	Unit	Total Annual Cost	Total Monthly Cost
Water Treatment-Structures & Plant		\$2.29	MDD	1,588	ccf - Turnouts MDD Capacity	\$3,634	\$302.86
T&D-Transmission Mains		\$1.70	MDD	1,588	ccf - Turnouts MDD Capacity	\$2,706	\$225
						Annual Fixed	\$6,340
						Monthly Fixed	\$528
						Total Fixed	\$292,338
							\$24,362

*Readiness to Serve Volume:Based on pre 2017 Ten-Year Historical Usage Average

Table 12: Proposed Wholesale Water Rates

Wholesale Water Rates		
Calendar Year	Annual Fixed Charge	Variable Rate per AF
2022	\$292,338	\$205.88