



# Westlands Water District

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June 12, 2017

*This notice contains important information about the following:*

- **Abandonment of Existing Benefit Assessment Methodology**
- **New Assessment Methodology to Establish a New Assessment for Special Benefits**
- **District Election Process**

## **Abandonment of Existing Benefit Assessment Methodology**

On June 2, 2017, during a public hearing, the Board of Directors of the Westlands Water District, sitting as a Board of Equalization, voted to reject the existing benefit assessment methodology for the 1965 Repayment Contract for the District's internal distribution system and not to equalize the proposed 2017 assessment roll. As a result of this action, landowners will not be charged an assessment based on the benefit assessment methodology used by the District since 1990. A new benefit assessment methodology will be proposed by the District. See below.

## **New Assessment Methodology to Establish a New Assessment for Special Benefits**

At the June 2, 2017 special meeting, the Board of Directors voted to adopt a new benefit assessment methodology that will require the District to conduct a Proposition 218 hearing (commonly referred to as a protest hearing). The protest hearing consists of three main parts: a mailed notice, a public hearing, and counting of the assessment ballots. Each District landowner will have the right to submit an assessment ballot which will indicate support for or opposition to the proposed assessment. Prior to the protest hearing, an Engineer's Report will be completed to support the new benefit assessment methodology. The Engineer's Report will be made available to the public. CH2M Hill was hired by the District to develop the new benefit assessment methodology and the Engineer's Report.

The protest hearing is scheduled for Tuesday, August 29, 2017 at 8:00 a.m. at the District's Fresno office. A notice along with an assessment ballot will be mailed out to landowners within the District. The ballots are required to be returned to the District prior to the conclusion of the protest hearing. An assessment cannot be imposed unless the assessment ballots favoring the assessment exceed the assessment ballots opposing the assessment. The weight of a ballot is determined according to the proportional financial obligation of the property owner.

The collection of revenues authorized by the adoption of the new assessment, if approved by the landowners, will not generate additional revenue for the District beyond what has been included in the District's budget based on approved rates and charges. The assessment, however, may increase or decrease the assessment to individual landowners in comparison to prior years.

## **District Election Process**

If the new benefit assessment methodology is approved, the 2017 District election will be based on the new assessment roll. If the proposed benefit assessment is not approved, the District

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election would be conducted based upon one vote for each acre owned by the landowner within the District. The District will conduct an all-mail election for the Board of Directors on Tuesday, October 24, 2017. Ballots will be mailed to each District landowner on Monday, September 25, 2017.

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