



Westlands Water District

Proposed 2017 Assessment

Westlands Water District (District) is approaching the final year of its obligation under the 1965 repayment contract with the United States for repayment of the internal distribution system. To collect money to repay this obligation, the District has been assessing its landowners annually, according to an assessment book adopted by its Board. The methodology used for assessments has not changed since the passage of Proposition 218, so the District has not been required to subject the methodology to requirements imposed by that constitutional amendment.

In response to inquiries from landowners, the Board of Directors was directed to develop a new assessment going forward. The constitutional requirements of Proposition 218 apply to any new assessment methodology that the District pursues. Here are answers to the most frequently asked questions about the proposed assessments.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is Proposition 218?

Proposition 218 is a Constitutional Initiative approved by the voters of California in November 1996, which requires new or increased assessments to be approved by affected landowners.

What am I going to be asked to do?

You will be asked to vote yes or no on the new assessment, which matches costs to landowners with the benefits bestowed by the District on the land.

Why is the District going through this process?

Under the California Water Code and the District's By Laws, the number of votes cast by landowners in District elections is determined by the assessed value of the landowner's land, as determined by the District's assessment book. In light of the repayment of the 1965 repayment contract and to more accurately reflect benefits bestowed on District lands, the District conducted a study to assess lands within its boundary commensurate with the benefits

bestowed by the District. Under the new assessment, the District proposes to convert components of its fixed O&M costs and certain bond repayments to a benefit assessment and correspondingly reduce the amounts of these costs recovered from other revenue sources. Thus, the total revenue to the District would remain unchanged.

Will my total costs to the District go up?

Overall, the total amount of revenue the District collects through rates and charges to fund Operations and Maintenance and other activities is not anticipated to increase as a result of the proposed new assessment. The new assessment methodology is proposed to include components of its fixed O&M costs and certain bond repayments to a benefit assessment. This will result in a reduction in existing land-based charges and O&M water rates. Each individual parcel will be assessed depending on the special benefits bestowed on that parcel. Therefore, charges for an individual parcel could increase.

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS CONTINUED

Does the assessment keep increasing after 2027?

No. Landowners would need to approve a new property assessment beyond 2027.

What are the special benefits bestowed and the proposed assessment rates?

The District's primary responsibility and purpose is to deliver CVP water supply to land eligible to receive an annual allocation of CVP water. For purposes of benefit assessment, this is a special benefit to those lands, because not all lands within the District are eligible to receive such an allocation. The District also provides supplemental water to all lands (including those without a CVP allocation), conveys (wheels) water for individual landowners, and provides other, water-related services to lands within its boundaries. These are also special benefits that do not accrue to the public at large, but only to lands having access to and ability to make beneficial use of the District's distribution system and/or water supplies. The proposed rate for lands eligible for other water supply is \$10.63 per acre and for lands eligible for CVP allocation is \$36.50 per acre.

Has anyone reviewed the proposed assessment?

Yes. The District hired an independent consulting firm to review potential assessments and prepare an Engineers' Report, as required by Proposition 218. The consultant has evaluated the proposed assessment and supports both the methodology of calculating the benefits bestowed by the District and the dollar amounts of the assessment. The Engineer's Report can be viewed on the District's website here: wwd.ca.gov.

Who should I contact with questions?

Questions should be directed to the Deputy General Manager – Finance and Administration, Bobbie Ormonde at (559) 241-6203.

Will I have a chance to comment?

Yes. A public hearing on the proposed assessment will be held on Tuesday, August 29, 2017, at

8:00 a.m. at the District office located at 3130 N. Fresno St., Fresno, CA 93703.

How and when do I cast my ballot?

Ballots were mailed to landowners of record with Fresno and Kings Counties on July 14, 2017. The ballot, which includes a list of assessor's parcel numbers (APNs) to be assessed and the amount to be assessed, must be received in the District office prior to the conclusion of the public hearing portion that begins at 8:00 a.m. on Tuesday, August 29, 2017. Ballots will be weighted based on financial obligation for each parcel.

Does the assessment cover Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) or potential Drainage Settlement costs?

No. The proposed assessment does not include costs associated with SGMA or any potential Drainage Settlement costs.

Do I have to pay the contract repayment benefit assessment this year?

No. The contract repayment benefit assessment pertaining to the 1965 Repayment Contract was not adopted by the Board of Directors.

What costs that were previously in Land Based Charges are now in the proposed assessment?

Costs that were previously in Land Based Charges that are included in the proposed assessment are the Long-Term Water Supply Debt Service (\$7.9292/Acre), O&M Costs All Lands (\$5.6231/Acre), O&M Costs Lands with Allocation (\$5.9952/Acre), O&M Costs Lands with System (\$3.2966/Acre), and O&M Costs Lands with both Allocation and System (17.3071/Acre). If the proposed assessment is approved, the District will bill landowners this year and off-set certain Land Based charges billed in this year.

July 17, 2017