



## BOARD INFORMATION

**TO:** Governing Board (Legislative Affairs and Communications Committee)

**FROM:** Management

**DATE:** September 1, 2023

**SUBJECT:** Update on Rate Outreach Plan (Information Item)

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### **SUMMARY**

At its January 25, 2023 meeting, the Board selected NBS as the consultant to prepare the 2023 Water Rate Study (Rate Study). A Rate Outreach Plan (Plan) was presented to the Board at its February 22, 2023 meeting. Monthly updates have been provided to the Legislative Affairs and Communications Committee and the Board on outreach activities related to the 2023 Rate Study.

Due to additional efforts regarding the development of the Rate Study, the Rate Hearing originally scheduled for August 30, 2023 was rescheduled to December 6, 2023. An updated Plan is included as Attachment 1. The Plan was modified to adjust to the revised timeline for the Rate Study and the Proposition 218 Public Hearing. The Authority is required by law to send a Proposition 218 notice to all of its customers with a description of the proposed changes in rates. A copy of the draft notice is included as Attachment 2.

The presentation dates for Council briefings in the City of National City and Chula Vista were moved from the summer to the fall as a result of these changes. Once the Rate Study is adopted, Public Affairs staff will reach out to the community list to begin scheduling additional presentations. The timeline for the Prop 218 has also been modified and is outlined in the revised Plan. A list of completed and upcoming activities and events included in the Plan is provided below:

### **Community Presentations**

<b>Presentation Date</b>	<b>Group</b>
April 12, 2023	Sweetwater Authority Rate Payer Association (SARPA)
April 13, 2023	Chula Vista Sunrise Rotary
April 19, 2023	Public Rate Workshop
May 2, 2023	South County Economic Development Council
May 3, 2023	Sweetwater Valley Civic Association
May 11, 2023	Pacific Southwest Association of Realtors (PSAR) Government Affairs Committee
June 1, 2023	Bonita Optimist Club

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September 9, 2023	National City Quarterly Council Breakfast
November 14, 2023	City of Chula Vista City Council Briefing
November 21, 2023	City of National City Council Briefing
TBD	National City Chamber of Commerce
TBD	City of Chula Vista Chamber of Commerce (pending reschedule from June 2023)
TBD	Sweetwater Kiwanis Club (pending reschedule from May 2023 at the request of the club)

### **Community Events (Outreach Opportunities)**

<b>Event</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Event Date</b>
South Bay Earth Day	Bayfront Park	April 15, 2023
Spring Garden Butterfly Festival	Water Conservation Garden	May 6, 2023
Community Open House	Robert A. Perdue Treatment Plant	June 3, 2023
Lemon Festival	Third Avenue	August 12, 2023
Community Open House	Richard A. Reynolds Groundwater Desalination Facility	September 21, 2023

### **Outreach Materials**

<b>Materials Developed</b>	<b>Details</b>
Draft Prop 218	A draft of the Prop 218 notice is currently under legal review in conjunction with the 2023 Water Rate Study. A draft of the Prop 218 notice will be provided to the Board with a draft of the 2023 Water Rate Study. If the water rate study is approved, the Prop 218 notice will mail to customers on Monday, October 16.
Social Media	Promotion of September 21 Open House
Postcard	Direct mail postcard promoting the September 21st Open House mailed to customers on August 24

### **PAST BOARD ACTIONS**

- February 22, 2023 The Governing Board approved the Rate Study Outreach Plan with the addition of community groups; recognizing that this process is still evolving and may include other participants.
- January 25, 2023 The Governing Board awarded a contract to NBS in the amount of \$58,200 for the 2023 Water Rate Cost of Service Study.

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### **FISCAL IMPACT**

Funds for the proposed plan are covered in the Authority's approved FY 2022-23 and FY 2023-24 Budget under Fund 10-10-120-5620 Administration (Public Affairs, Program Supplies). To date, the Authority has spent \$15,304 in rate outreach efforts. This includes event social media advertisement, billing inserts, signs, and refreshments for the June 3 Open House event, as well as a direct mail postcard and social media advertisements for the September 21 Open House event.

### **POLICY /STRATEGIC PLAN**

Strategic Plan Goal 4: Customer Service, Citizen Engagement and Community Relations (CS)

- Objective CS1: Develop an outreach program that includes a multi-faceted approach to communications and customer outreach - including, but not limited to, press releases, web-based communications, social media, community presentations, community events, educational opportunities, and periodically surveying customer.

### **CONCLUSION**

This is an information item.

### **ATTACHMENT**

1. Updated Rate Outreach Plan
2. Draft Proposition 218 Notice