

## **Are there things I could do to offset the water rate adjustment?**

There are several ways to save money by reducing personal water use and increasing water use efficiency.

- With more than 60 percent of water being used outdoors, taking action to adjust outdoor water use during cooler months, when plants need less water to stay healthy, will save on costs.
- To cut down on water costs, customers can install drought-tolerant landscaping.
- Customers can install smart irrigation in their yards and a weather-based irrigation controller to make sure water is used as efficiently as possible while staying within their specific water budget.

## **How are water rates determined?**

Water rates are developed through a comprehensive cost-of-service study that examines the water rates to the actual cost of providing water service. To determine the appropriate rate structure for customers, the City's water rate consultant, Raftelis, reviewed the current rate structure and consumption data along with ongoing operational, maintenance, capital, and bond obligations to determine the new rate structure approach.

Bimonthly fixed charges are charged at a flat rate based on the size of the meter. All customers are required to pay a fixed meter fee and a commodity/variable rate based on water consumption.

## **When was the last rate increase?**

The last water rate schedule increase was approved by the City Council and the Water Authority on December 17, 2019, which included a 15% increase in January 2020, 9% increases in January 2021 and 2022, and 8% increases in January of 2023 and 2024.

## **How is my water payment used?**

Since general fund tax dollars are not used to pay for the City's water system, all proceeds from water bills go directly to fund the water delivery operation. This includes maintaining various critical water infrastructure like water mainline replacements and maintenance; well replacements and maintenance; treatment plant operations and maintenance; hydrant maintenance; backflow compliance; and meter maintenance. The El Monte Water Authority maintains an extensive system of water infrastructure including water production and distribution facilities that deliver potable water to approximately 3,500 service connections and covers about 17.6 percent (17.6%) of the City's population. The water system infrastructure (Water Enterprise) is leased from the City by the Water Authority. The

Water Enterprise consists of six (6) groundwater wells, two (2) reservoirs with a total capacity of 1.2 million gallons, three (3) emergency connections to neighboring purveyors and forty-six (46) miles of water distribution lines.

**What is Proposition (Prop) 218?**

Prop 218, passed by voters in California in 1996, specifies the required process for public participation in water rate setting that water agencies like the City of El Monte must follow. Prop 218 requires that a public hearing take place when the City proposes to increase water service rates or establish new rates. The law's intent is to ensure that rates and fees are reasonable and proportional to the cost of providing service.