



Yosemite West Property & Homeowners, Inc. (YWPHI)

<http://www.yosemitewest.org/>

January 2, 2018

To: All property owners and voters in Yosemite West

Yosemite West property owners and residents who are customers of Mariposa County Public Works are facing approximately **tripled water and wastewater rates to be effective in March 2018**, as well as a change to replace the Yosemite West Maintenance District with a newly formed "Zone of Benefit" legal structure. The County mailed notifications in mid-December. A public "Majority Protest Hearing" is scheduled on February 6, 2018 for the 3 proposals, where each is decided by counting only the protests (votes against), and comparing to the total possible vote count, effectively considering "no response" to be a vote in favor of each proposal. For each proposal, if you are not in favor, you should submit a Protest vote in advance via written letter (links below) to the Mariposa County Clerk of the Board.

BACKGROUND

When the Yosemite West subdivision was formed in 1967, an Assessment District based on 1911 law was created to provide funding for our Maintenance District, which is responsible for water and sewer. In an Assessment District, rate changes are subject to approval by a majority of written ballots cast (such as the 2004 assessment to rebuild our wastewater treatment facility). The proposed change of Yosemite West to a Zone of Benefit (as defined by California Prop. 218 passed in 1996) would mean the County becomes allowed to increase rates without written ballots, and a *Majority Protest* (receiving *Written Protests* from more than 50% of those eligible) would be necessary to oppose rate increases.

The last water and wastewater rate increase in Yosemite West was in 2006. The County in 2015 contracted an engineering firm to analyze the Yosemite West water and wastewater infrastructure needs for operation, maintenance, and some capital improvement expenses for a five-year period. This "Rate Study" was completed in 2017 (posted at <http://www.mariposacounty.org/index.aspx?nid=1749>) and proposes new increases to our water and wastewater rates that pass the entire cost for maintenance and scheduled improvements onto ratepayers. For example, the water+sewer combined rate for a standard "1 EDU (Equivalent Dwelling Unit)" 7500 gallon usage will triple from a current price of \$113 per month to a proposed new 2nd year (starting 2019) price of \$339 per month.

COMPARISONS

The following table compares the 3 proposals, which are subject to different counting rules:

PROPOSALS	FORMATION OF ZONE OF BENEFIT FOR WATER AND SEWER SERVICE	PROP. 218 NOTIFICATION ON WATER RATES	PROP. 218 NOTIFICATION ON WASTEWATER RATES
County letters	http://yosemitewest.org/County_zone_formation.pdf	http://yosemitewest.org/County_water_rate_proposal.pdf	http://yosemitewest.org/County_sewer_rate_proposal.pdf
IF YOU TAKE NO ACTION →	Yosemite West will become a Zone of Benefit, allowing County to raise Water and Sewer rates without a ballot based on votes cast.	If a majority do <u>not</u> protest, the water rates will increase as proposed, to 2.3 times current rates after 5 years for example 1 EDU (7500 gallon) monthly usage.	If a majority do <u>not</u> protest, the wastewater (sewer) rates will increase as proposed, to 4.8 times current rates after 5 years for example 1 EDU (7500 gallon) monthly usage.

IF YOU TAKE ACTION BY SUBMITTING A PROTEST →	If a majority of registered voters protest, the Zone of Benefit will <u>not</u> be formed. Yosemite West will remain an Assessment District, and may be able to have a greater role in rate negotiations.	If a majority of owners protest, the water rates will <u>not</u> increase per the current proposal. Water rates will remain unchanged.	If a majority of owners protest, the wastewater (sewer) rates will <u>not</u> increase per the current proposal. Wastewater rates will remain unchanged.
Who is entitled to submit a <i>Written Protest</i>	Mariposa County <u>registered voters</u> with address in Yosemite West are entitled to submit a protest.	Property owners of record or ratepaying tenants are entitled to submit a protest.	Property owners of record or ratepaying tenants are entitled to submit a protest.
Possible votes	Each registered voter may submit one protest vote. Multiple protest votes are allowed per property address.	Only one protest vote will be counted per property address (Assessor's Parcel Number).	Only one protest vote will be counted per property address (Assessor's Parcel Number).
Voter roll definition	Secretary of State at http://registertovote.ca.gov	Properties that receive water & sewer from the current Yosemite West Maintenance District, operated by Mariposa County Public Works. Vacant parcels (undeveloped lots) are not eligible to protest.	
Benefits of Approval	A Zone of Benefit provides a current legal structure for the County to raise utility rates.	Water service and quality will be maintained per the plan listed in the "Rate Study".	Wastewater service and treatment will be maintained per the plan listed in the "Rate Study".
Risks of Protest	County has no obligation or timeline for a revised compromise rate proposal.	Service reductions, including the possibility of rationing.	If maintenance inadequate, possible "Notice of Violations" for state or federal standards.
Benefits of Protest	Maintains more legal standing for discussions with County.	Possibility of forcing other funding sources than passing entire cost onto ratepayers.	
Template Protest letter	http://yosemitewest.org/YW_protest_zob.pdf	http://yosemitewest.org/YW_protest_water_rates.pdf	http://yosemitewest.org/YW_protest_sewer_rates.pdf

COMMUNITY CONFERENCE CALLS FOR QUESTION & ANSWER

In order to facilitate community awareness, the YWPHI will host two "**Community Conference Calls**", where we encourage you to ask questions regarding the Mariposa County proposals. Both calls will review the same information, yet be guided by your questions. The two call options are scheduled for:

Tuesday January 16th at 7 p.m., dial 1-866-679-9995, use access code 54080637#

Thursday January 25th at 7 p.m., dial 1-866-679-9995, use access code 42122948#

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

If you intend to submit *Written Protests*, we suggest mailing before January 27th to ensure letters are received by the County Clerk of the Board, prior to counting at the Public Hearing on **Tuesday, February 6, 2018, 2 p.m.** at the Government Center, 5100 Bullion Street in Mariposa.

We urge you to carefully consider these issues, voice your opinions, and make your decisions regarding the County proposals.

Sincerely, and representing YWPHI Board of Directors,
 Ted Williams
 President, YWPHI
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