



For Immediate Release

Ukiah Valley Water Authority Member Agencies Advance Proposed Water Rate Adjustments Following Completion of Regional Rate Study

(December 16, 2026 – Ukiah, CA) Member agencies of the Ukiah Valley Water Authority (UVWA) are advancing proposed water rate increases to ensure they can continue to operate safe, reliable water systems and address years of deferred maintenance and underfunded infrastructure needs.

Each water district independently considered and proposed its own rate adjustments based on its unique system conditions, financial needs, and long-term capital requirements – those rate increases were reviewed and advanced by the UVWA Executive Committee on December 4th.

The proposed rate increases follow a financial study launched earlier this year by four of the five UVWA member agencies who all had expired rate studies and were due for updated analysis and rates. This includes the City of Ukiah, Millview County Water District, Redwood Valley County Water District, and Willow County Water District. The study was conducted by Hildebrand Consulting, an expert in utility financial plans; it analyzed revenue requirements and existing debts, and projected operating and capital costs.

Across the region and state, local water agencies are confronting a variety of challenges that require investment and action. These include:

- Deferred maintenance and aging infrastructure that must be addressed;
- Inflationary cost increases in materials needed for operation;
- Rising capital improvement costs;
- New regulatory requirements for water quality and reliability that require modernized operations;
- Underfunded reserves, which are essential to preventing service disruptions and emergency rate spikes; and
- Delayed action during COVID-19, when many agencies minimized or postponed needed rate adjustments.

300 Seminary Avenue, Ukiah, CA 95482
cityofukiah.com/uvwa

Each district separately reviewed the rate study, evaluated its system needs, and will pursue adoption of its new rate schedules through the publicly noticed Proposition 218 process.

Millview proposes increasing water rates by 15% on March 1, 2026, followed by 14% increases on July 1 of 2027, 2028, and 2029. For a typical single-family home (using about 7,500 gallons per month), the monthly bill will rise \$7.15 in 2026 and the monthly increase will be \$9.91 in 2029. The last increase to Millview's water rates was in 2011.

"Paying for regular maintenance and timely replacements is significantly more cost-effective than emergency repairs after something breaks," said Tim Prince, Millview's representative to UVWA. "These adjustments are about preventing catastrophic failures and ensuring long-term sustainability."

Redwood Valley proposes a 30% increase on March 1, 2026, followed by 12% on July 1, 2026, 6% on July 1, 2027, and 3% on July 1 of 2028 and 2029. For an average customer that amounts to a monthly increase of \$23.95 in 2026, but by 2029 the monthly increase is only \$3.81.

"We have been underfunded for years, and our infrastructure needs are significant," said Tom Schoeneman, Redwood Valley's representative to UVWA. "This plan allows us to catch up on critical maintenance and prepare for the future."


Willow proposes increasing rates by 19% on March 1, 2026, followed by 12% increases on July 1 of 2027, 2028, and 2029. For an average customer that amounts to a monthly increase of \$8.08 in 2026 and a monthly increase of \$7.61 in 2029.

"We must modernize our rate structures to address modern water supply and delivery needs," said Gary Nevill, Willow County Water District's representative to UVWA. "These increases are necessary to operate responsibly, replace outdated equipment, and maintain service reliability."

The City of Ukiah proposes increasing water rates by 6% on March 1, 2026, followed by 4% increases on July 1 of 2027, 2028, and 2029. For an average single-family home that amounts to an increase in the monthly bill of \$5.588 in 2026 and a monthly increase of \$4.27 in 2029.

"The City of Ukiah has been a leader in responding responsibly to reduced water supplies and adopting solutions to strengthen reliability, implement recycled water systems, and improve regional coordination," said Councilmember Juan Orozco, Ukiah's representative

300 Seminary Avenue, Ukiah, CA 95482
cityofukiah.com/uvwa



to UVWA. “We will continue to invest strategically in our system to secure a long-term reliable water future for our community.”

Calpella County Water District, also a member of UVWA, is already implementing its own 5-year rate schedule adopted in 2023 and therefore did not participate in the current rate study.

Even with the proposed Year 1 adjustments, all UVWA member agencies’ water rates remain below those of nearby communities, including Calistoga, St. Helena, Healdsburg, Cloverdale, and Willits.

No changes are proposed for the rate structure design, therefore water users will continue to pay a fixed monthly service charge based on the size of their meter in addition to a usage rate based on actual monthly usage.

In compliance with Proposition 218 requirements, a public hearing is scheduled for February 9, 2026 at 5:00 p.m. at the Ukiah Valley Conference Center. Under Proposition 218, water rates cannot exceed the actual cost of providing service, and customers must receive 45-days’ notice, an opportunity to protest, and a public hearing before any increase is adopted.

Separately from this rate adjustment process, the City of Ukiah is pursuing a state planning grant to fund engineering and design work needed to connect infrastructure across the UVWA member agencies – an effort that would improve system flexibility, drought preparedness, and long-term reliability. The SAFER Program, “Safe and Affordable Funding for Equity and Resilience,” would fund infrastructure improvements to connect the agencies, including pipelines and interties, storage tanks, booster stations and wells. That will allow water to move throughout the regional system where and when it’s needed most and strengthen service for every community.

For more information about the Ukiah Valley Water Authority and ongoing regional water efforts, visit cityofukiah.com/uvwa.

#

300 Seminary Avenue, Ukiah, CA 95482
cityofukiah.com/uvwa

