Increase in the West Whitewater River Subbasin Area of Benefit Replenishment Assessment Charge for 2015

Effective July 1, 2015, Coachella Valley Water District (CVWD) increased the annual replenishment assessment charge (RAC) in the West Whitewater River Subbasin Area of Benefit to $112 per acre-foot. This raised this RAC by only 1.6%, the smallest increase this fiscal year for the three areas of benefit in the Coachella Valley.

State law authorizes CVWD to collect a RAC from anyone who pumps more than 25 acre-feet of groundwater from the Coachella Valley’s aquifer. The district uses the RAC to fund its Groundwater Replenishment Program, which is essential for long-term reliability of the local groundwater supply.

Why was a rate increase to the RAC in the West Valley implemented?
CVWD is dedicated to providing exceptional services at the lowest possible cost while ensuring the district has the funds it needs to operate and provide those services. Rate increases were necessary to enable the district to:

- Cover increases in operating the Groundwater Replenishment Program to recharge the Coachella Valley’s aquifer and maintaining West Valley replenishment facilities.
- Cover increases in costs for obtaining State Water Project water and Supplemental Water purchases.

Who benefits from groundwater replenishment in the West Valley?
Everyone who uses groundwater, including residents and businesses, benefits from groundwater replenishment. When more water is pumped out of the aquifer than returned from natural or artificial means, the condition known as overdraft exists. This can lead to lost groundwater storage space, the need to drill deeper wells and concerns about the protection of water quality. The valley’s first groundwater replenishment facilities are those in the West Valley and since 1973, when State Water Project water was first delivered to the Coachella Valley, more than 2.9 million acre-feet has been replenished there. In recent years considerable improvements were made to West Valley replenishment facilities to make them more efficient and to guard against storm damage.

What sort of increases in the RAC can be expected in the future?
The RAC was one of four areas CVWD sought independent development of cost-of-service studies and rate recommendations. Under consideration for a future fiscal year is the consolidation of the three RACs (West Valley, East Valley, Mission Creek) into a single RAC. This could impact the RAC in the West Valley.

How can I learn more about the rate increase?
Detailed information about proposed rate adjustments were outlined in the Notice of Public Hearing that was mailed in March to current/potential RAC payers. It is available on the district’s website at www.cvwd.org. For future reference, the district conducts public meetings before its Board of Directors votes on proposed increases to the three RACs within the boundaries of CVWD.