

WHAT'S ON TAP



NEWS FOR DC WATER CUSTOMERS • SPRING ISSUE



Authority Proposes 4.8% Rate Increase

Rising costs and efforts to invest more in DC Water's infrastructure, including the removal of lead service lines and the replacement of aging water mains and other systems, have led the Authority to seek a 4.8% rate increase in 2025.

For the average residential customer, the proposed rate change will increase their monthly bill by roughly \$6 per month. The good news is the Authority was able to deliver a lower increase than the initial forecast of 7% for FY2025. In late 2023, DC Water's credit ratings were reaffirmed as Aa1/AAA/AA+ by Moody's, Standard and Poor's, and Fitch Ratings, respectively. Our strong creditworthiness ensures that the Authority can continue to borrow at lower rates and pass the savings on to customers.

However, even a modest rate increase will pose challenges for our most financially vulnerable customers. "I know that some of our families are struggling financially," said **CEO and General Manager David L. Gadis**. "When we realized a rate increase was inevitable, we committed to extending and expanding equity through our Customer Assistance Programs for those who cannot afford water, including a new CAP+ program for very low-income households."

In FY 2023, the DC Water Cares suite of assistance programs aided 8,555 customers who needed help paying their water bills and accessed more than \$8 million in available subsidies. Participants

received discounts on their monthly bills and were even eligible for an additional \$2,000 to help pay down past due balances.

For FY2025, the Authority is seeking to partner with the District on a new initiative to help low-income households with the identification, assessment, and repair of existing leaks. DC Water would cover the cost of the assessment, and the District would leverage federal funds to complete the repairs. Such an initiative, if approved, would make a dramatic difference for families that have existing leaks, but cannot afford to repair them.

DC Water wants to hear from customers and is planning a series of in-person and virtual Town Hall Meetings to present and answer questions on the proposed rate increase.

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**Need help with your bill,
DC Water Cares. See our
suite of assistance programs at
dcwater.com/cares.**

CEO's Message

I know from talking to customers that some people don't realize DC Water is a municipal water authority, not a for-profit business. That's important because it means your bill payments and other revenue go entirely towards the cost of providing excellent water and wastewater services to you. We reinvest every dollar in our operations and infrastructure.



The unfortunate reality is that even as we work hard to be more efficient and to keep overhead costs down, there are pressures driving our annual budgets higher, including rising inflation, supply chain challenges, and increases in what we spend on chemicals, energy, and insurance premiums.

Still, we were able to reduce our proposed rate increase for next year, as detailed in the cover story in this issue of What's On Tap. That demonstrates our commitment to ask customers only for what is needed to fund our operations and make capital improvements.

And while DC Water doesn't have shareholders, it does pay dividends by serving as an equitable economic engine for the District. We create jobs, offer apprenticeships and training programs for DC residents, provide contract opportunities for local small, minority, and women-owned businesses, and we strive to deliver equity at every community touchpoint.

I hope to see you at one of our Town Hall Meetings or at the Board's Public Hearing on May 9.

David L. Gadis
CEO and General Manager
ceosuggestions@dcwater.com

Annual Pipe Cleaning Underway

Your tap water may taste and smell different this spring. Here's what you need to know to stay informed.

This year, the temporary switch in drinking water disinfectant began March 25 and runs until May 6. This essential practice maintains pipe integrity so we can deliver the highest quality water. Throughout most of the year, the Washington Aqueduct uses chloramine, a stable chlorine and ammonia compound, to ensure clean water through DC Water's 1,350-mile distribution system.

During the cleaning process, **chloramine** shifts temporarily to **free chlorine**. Crews



will flush hydrants, distributing the disinfectant through the system. Chlorine levels are continually monitored for safety. If you notice a temporary change in taste and smell, run the cold tap for a couple of minutes and refrigerate it in an open pitcher for a few hours. Visit dcwater.com/chlorine-switch or call **202-612-3440** for more tips.

Spring Into Bloom

As spring emerges, residents are gearing up to revitalize their lawns and gardens. As you tend to your flower beds and planters, DC Water encourages you to consider these valuable tips:

Spring into Sustainability with Bloom

Discover Bloom®, DC Water's eco-friendly soil conditioner and compost substitute, offering slow-release nutrients for plant nourishment and organic matter to enrich soils. Crafted from EPA-certified Class A Exceptional Quality biosolids at Blue Plains, the world's advanced wastewater plant, Bloom undergoes high-temperature treatment to eliminate potential pathogens. Its benefits include cost savings, reduced carbon footprint, and a gentle nutrient release that avoids environmental harm.

Garden Revitalization

Bloom rejuvenates gardens, restores depleted soils, and stimulates robust growth. Users praise its impact on grass color and texture, attributing the difference to Bloom's slow-release nitrogen and iron. Suitable for both hobbyist gardens and large-scale farms, Bloom contributes to increased yields and improved drought resistance.



Landscaping Transformation

In District areas with clay-heavy soils, Bloom aids drainage and aeration, fostering vibrant flowers, bushes, trees, and lawns. To purchase Bloom, visit bloomsoil.com or contact bloom@bloomsoil.com.

Meter Maintenance

Ensure clear meters for accurate water bills, as obstructed meters may lead to estimated billing.

High Usage Notification Alert

Respond promptly to alerts from DC Water's High Usage Notification Application (HUNA), indicating potential leaks or excessive water use.

Dial Before You Dig

Contact 811 two working days before any digging project to locate and mark utilities.

REMINDER

New Credit Card Processing Fee



Credit cards are a convenient way to pay for purchases and other transactions, including paying your water bill. But credit card processing fees are increasing quickly, and all customers – whether they use credit cards or not – have been paying for those fees in their rates.

Going forward, those customers who use this payment option will bear the costs. In February, DC Water began assessing a processing fee if you pay your water bill using a credit or debit card. The fee is \$1.95 per transaction (up to \$1,200) for residential customers (2.65% for non-residential accounts).

There is still a free payment option for customers. We continue to accept E-Check payments at no additional charge. To see all of the payment options, please visit dcwater.com/paying-your-bill.

Rate Increase continued

The in-person meetings are set for Saturday, April 20 and Saturday, April 27 at 11:00 am. As this Newsletter goes to print, the details of the meetings are being finalized. Please check our website at dcwater.com/townhalls for the locations of the meetings.

Two virtual Town Hall Meetings, covering the same content, will be held on April 4 and on April 30, beginning at 6 pm, and access information will be posted on dcwater.com/townhalls.

The Board of Directors will also hold a Public Hearing on the proposed rate increase at 6:30 pm on May 9. To sign up to speak call the Board Secretary at **202-787-2330** or email board.secretary@dcwater.com.



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