



City of Arcata

Proposition 218 Water/Wastewater Rate Hearing Community Participation Guide

What is Proposition 218?

Proposition 218 is a California constitutional requirement that gives property owners the right to receive notice, review proposed water rate increases, and formally protest them before a city can adopt new or increased water rates.

Why Your Participation Matters

Public participation ensures transparency, accountability, and fairness in how water and wastewater rates are set. Your input helps the City Council understand community concerns, financial impacts, and service priorities before making a final decision.

Step 1: Notice of Proposed Water/Wastewater Rates

Before any rate increase is adopted, the City must mail a written notice to:

- Property owners and tenants responsible for paying bills

The notice will include:

- The proposed new water/wastewater rates
- The reason for the increase (e.g., infrastructure, regulatory compliance, operations)
- The date, time, and location of the public hearing
- Instructions on how to submit a written protest

Step 2: Review the Information

You are encouraged to:

- Review the rate study
- Understand how the rates are calculated and how they may affect your bill
- Ask questions of city staff prior to the hearing, if desired
- Attend the Public Workshop on 2.25.26 at the D Street Neighborhood Center

These materials are available on the City's website [Arcata 2025 Water and Wastewater Rate Study | Arcata, CA](#).

Step 3: Submit a Written Protest (Optional but Important)

Under Proposition 218:

- Only written protests count toward stopping the rate increase
- Protests must:
 - Be in writing
 - Identify the property address or parcel number
 - Clearly state opposition to the proposed water rates
 - **Be received before or during the public hearing**

If written protests are submitted by a majority of affected parcels, the City cannot adopt the proposed rates.

Timeline of Proposed dates for City Proposition 218 Process

February 4, 2026: City Council will consider adopting a Resolution setting the Proposition 218 Hearing for April 15, 2026, at 6:00pm or soon thereafter.

February 25, 2026: Water and Wastewater Workshop to be held at 5:30pm at the D Street Neighborhood Center.

February 27, 2026: No later than, proposition 218 notices mailed to property owners and tenants paying utility bills.

April 15, 2026: City Council will hold a public hearing on the Proposed Water and Wastewater rate increases. **Written** protest must be submitted before or during the public hearing.

May 1, 2026: Revised water rates will be implemented.

