

ITEM NO.
6.2



Ratepayer Advocate

Santa Clarita Valley Water Agency

ROBERT D. NIEHAUS, INC.

FEBRUARY 6, 2024

Project Team



Robert Niehaus, Ph.D.
Project Director



Ichiko Kido, M.B.A.
Ratepayer Advocate



Anthony Elowsky, M.A.
Backup Ratepayer Advocate



Bjorn Kallerud, M.S.
Economist



Zachary VanDinther, B.S.
Economist



Why RDN?

- Experienced Local Firm
 - Headquartered in Santa Barbara with 20 California consultants
 - Celebrating 40 years of consulting and over 1,000 successful projects
 - SCV Water Ratepayer Advocate 2019 - 2023
- Understand the Ratepayer Function
 - Serve ratepayers and at the pleasure of the Board
 - Triple mandate: sufficient Agency revenues, legal compliance, lowest possible ratepayer impact
 - Offer the Board our independent assessment and alternative rate/fee options as appropriate
- Effective Customer Engagement
 - Accessible for customer questions in-person, website Q&A, e-mail, phone
 - Reports that highlight customer impacts and the lowest cost options to ratepayers
 - FAQ on website, interactive customer bill impact tool, rate calculator



RDN Ratepayer Advocate Experience

- **Retail Water Rate Study (2021)** – We ensured the lowest possible rate adjustments for ratepayers with a 0% revenue increase in Year 1 when staff recommended a 5.5% annual revenue increase.
- **Facility Capacity Fee Study (2019)** – We refined the methodology by calculating costs at their present value and then adjusted costs each year based on the Engineering News-Record (ENR) index. This improved accuracy of construction costs and equity between current and future developments.
- **Valencia Capacity Fee Study (2023)** – We identified an issue with proposed fees: debt service was not incorporated. We worked with staff and consultants to ensure debt service was included.
- **Available to Ratepayers** – Agency website directly links to RDN Ratepayer Advocate phone number and email address. We answered 100% of questions within one business day.
- **Enhance Customer Understanding** – Customer Bill Impact Tool and Bill Impact Calculator.





Bill Filters

Division

Santa Clarita

Meter Size

3/4"

Where can I find my meter size?

Rates

Effective July 1, 2024

Billing Units (ccf)

1 ccf = 748 gallons

20

Monthly Bill Comparison

Table Graph

