

Locals Push Back Against Proposed Rate Hikes

By Linda Sutter April 23, 2026



CRESCENT CITY CA - On April 16, at 1pm, while much of the working public was on the job, a small but determined group of Crescent City residents gathered outside City Hall to protest a looming financial burden: the proposed doubling of water and sewer rates.

If approved, residents could see their monthly utility bills climb to nearly \$200 per month by 2030 - a sharp increase that many say is both unjustified and poorly explained.

A Justification That Raises More Questions Than Answers

Earlier this month, the City announced that the primary reason for the increase is simple: rates have not been raised in the last 10 years. For many residents, that explanation falls flat. Over that same 10 year period, the City has reportedly accumulated \$4 million through existing water and sewer fee collections. Critics argue that this raises a fundamental question: If millions have already been collected, why are residents now being asked to pay significantly more?

The concern deepens when looking at past financial decisions. Just a few years ago the City reportedly held \$6 million, yet took out a \$2 million loan to construct the Brother Johnathan Wall. Whether that loan was repaid after grant funding was received remains unclear. Even more troubling to some is the lack of transparency surrounding where that \$2 million ultimately went.

City Manager Eric Wier has stated the City must occasionally fund emergency projects costing around \$100,000.00. However, residents point out that this explanation does little to account for discrepancies.

PUBLIC NOTICE - BUT IS IT REACHING THE PUBLIC ?

April 16, residents should have already received notices in their mailboxes regarding the proposed rate increases. However, with many unaware of the urgency of the process, community members have taken matters into their own hands.- literally walking neighborhoods to gather signatures.

Under Proposition 218 process, residents have the power to formally protest the rate increase- but only if they act quickly.

HOW TO MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD

To successfully submit a protest; you must clearly state you oppose the water and sewer rate increase. Your name must be on the utility bill, include your service address or APN (assessor's Parcel Number), and immediately mail or call Donna Westfall (707) 951-0184 or Linda Sutter (707) 951-3048 to obtain your opposition and submit it to the city. The deadline is the end of May.

This is not a passive process-failure to submit a valid protest effectively counts as acceptance.

COMMUNITY MOBILIZATION EFFORTS

Local Organizers are assisting residents in navigating the protest process: Linda Sutter 707-951-3048 and Donna Westfall 707-951-0184. They are working to ensure that every qualifying protest is properly submitted and counted.

BROADER IMPACT: BUSINESSES, SCHOOLS, AND THE HARBOR DISTRICT

This issue does not stop at residential households. Businesses, schools, and even the Harbor District will be affected by increased utility costs- expenses that are likely to be passed down to consumers, families, and taxpayers in one form or another.

Bottom Line

The City stated they were after 50 million dollar grants. However, instead of applying for the grants first, they come after the hardworking citizens who struggle for a roof and food on the table. There is no urgent need to double your sewer and water rates especially when there is an access of 4 million dollars in the coffers due to what they collect now.

