



## Budget increase will boost reliability, water supply

With the recent approval of our FY2023-2024 water, wastewater and stormwater budgets, the Public Service Board gave us the green light to boost system reliability and our city's future water supply.

Critical infrastructure necessities drove us to seek a record water and wastewater capital improvement budget to prioritize:

- expansion of our Bustamante Wastewater Treatment Plant because of burgeoning growth on our city's East Side.
- advancement of new water supply projects to make sure that future generations can enjoy the same quality of life that we do.
- new flood-control projects to protect public safety.



Construction at the Bustamante Wastewater Treatment Plant will help provide services to the growing East Side.



Paliades Stormwater Drainage project will increase dam capacity and control stormwater runoff.

### Explaining increase

During budget planning, the need for increases became clear after we were hit with a combination of inflation and retention challenges, as well as rising energy costs. But critical investments in our system cannot be postponed.

We all need reliable, quality water; we need pipeline integrity that can carry wastewater securely to treatment plants; and we need to expand our stormwater system to keep everyone safe.

EPWater's primary source of revenue stems from ratepayers who pay their monthly water, wastewater and stormwater bill. The utility does not receive any revenue from property taxes.

### Keeping an eye on affordability

We always struggle with decisions involving rate and fee increases, and affordability for our low-income customers is always taken into consideration.

Although we pursue alternative sources of state/federal infrastructure funding, it is not enough to fill the sizeable fiscal gap for these expensive projects. We secured more than \$22 million last year, and more than \$50 million in grant funding requests are pending.

As always, we urge our customers to step up water conservation efforts to offset the impact of higher bills. We offer tips and tools [online](#) to help our customers reduce their water consumption and protect our water supply for future generations.

We also urge low-income customers to take advantage of third-party customer assistance programs, such as the Low-Income Household Water Assistance Program offered through Project Bravo, to help with water bills.

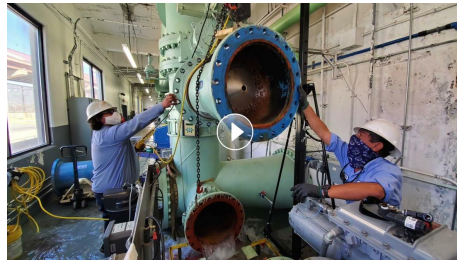
The following affordability measures were also approved by the PSB:

- The Water Supply Replacement Charge is waived for customers using less than 4 CCFs (2,990 gallons) monthly. An average of 48,000 low-water users currently takes advantage of the waiver each month and may be eligible for an updated waiver of \$14.04 a month.
- An increased water volume from 4 CCFs to 5 CCFs (3,740 gallons) included in the monthly minimum charge: This will result in an estimated 18,000 customers who may save \$6 a month.

Even with the increase, water bills remain among the lowest in Texas and the region.

When it comes to water, any investment helps ensure our systems' long-term sustainability. The price of drinking water is increasing, but investing in reliability and our water supply is essential for the economic vitality of El Paso.

We are grateful for your support and are eager to deliver on our promise of reliable water and quality service.



On the Water Front is a publication of El Paso Water. Contact Christina Montoya at 915.594.5596 or [cmontoya@epwater.org](mailto:cmontoya@epwater.org) with any comments or questions.

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