

Bay Point water providers to ask for rate hike in 2011

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Posted: 02/02/2010 04:50:45 PM PST

Updated: 02/02/2010 05:22:57 PM PST

Bay Point's private water supplier is in the early stages of asking the state's Public Utilities Commission to change customer rates over the next two years — including a large spike in 2011.

A rate case proposal submitted to the state agency last month by Golden State Water Co. proposed increasing rates for its 4,800 customers 33.3 percent for 2011, followed by a decrease of 0.8 percent in 2012. An alternative proposal would increase rates at a more even pace — 22.6 percent in 2011 and 17.6 percent in 2012.

Typical Bay Point residents using about 270 gallons of water per day would see their bills climb from \$63.04 to \$84.04 and down to \$83.33 in 2012, depending on the state's decision.

The new rates would cover rising costs to operate and maintain the local water system, funding more \$2 million in local improvements critical to providing high-quality water, Golden State officials said.

A meeting will be held 6:30 tonight in the Ambrose Community Center, 3105 Willow Pass Road, to allow the public to vet the filing process.

Golden State is also awaiting a decision on a 2009 filing to make permanent a temporary agreement the company currently has to purchase treated water from the Contra Costa Water District. That water would be stored in Golden State reservoirs and distributed to residents.

The change provides tap water with fluoride and meets regulatory standards for trihalomethanes, hazardous chemical byproducts that have concerned residents for years.

Golden State's proposal with the state utilities commission includes that rate increase request.

For years, Bay Point residents have paid more for water than have residents in neighboring communities, even though a third of its residents live below the poverty line. Residents elsewhere are charged about the same for water when factoring in property taxes, subsidies and connection fees not included on a water bill, Golden State officials said.

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