

## STOP the \$167M SEWER PROJECT! – TOP 10 FAQs

- 1) WEREN'T THE WATER & SEWER RATE INCREASES APPROVED IN 2015 SUPPOSED TO BUILD A NEW SEWER? – Yes. In addition, the basis for the rate increase included about \$14M in repairs to the existing sewer and water lines, \$2M in deferred maintenance costs, and \$75M for a new sewer plant. We don't know how much of this work (if any) has been completed, and we have asked the City for a full accounting of these projects. We object to any rate increases until we know how the money generated by the 2015 increases has been spent, and what level of debt service the City can support from the 2015 increases.
- 2) DO WE REALLY NEED A NEW SEWER PLANT? – Not right away. But the existing plant is 60+ years old and needs to be sufficiently updated to consistently comply with the quality of water set by the U.S. EPA.
- 3) IF WE DON'T NEED A NEW PLANT – WHAT IS DRIVING THIS \$167M PROJECT? – The City Council set a goal a few years ago of establishing "complete water independence" by diversifying drinking water sources. Another goal was to maximize the production and use of "recycled" water. While these goals are admirable, they are unaffordable at \$167M for most residents of Morro Bay, and the cost of producing "recycled" water for irrigation is much more expensive than what schools, parks, farmers, and the golf course currently pay for their irrigation water which comes from wells. Lastly, moving the plant and piping three miles inland from its current location adds \$1,000,000's to the total project cost.
- 4) WHY IS OUR PROJECT SO EXPENSIVE (\$167M) COMPARED TO CAYUCOS (\$20M) AND LOS OSES (\$89M)? – In addition to the project components mentioned above, our review of the project design documents (and associated "cost opinions") are unnecessarily expensive and do not consider more affordable design approaches.
- 5) IS THE CITY PLANNING TO INCREASE RATES AGAIN THIS SPRING? – Yes, they are. We have been told that a Prop 218 to raise rates will be held in May 2018.
- 6) IF INCREASED WATER/SEWER RATES ARE APPROVED, WHAT WILL MY NEW RATES BE? – It depends on what your current bill is, but we expect that the average customer's combined monthly (for water and sewer) will be about \$300 or more. The City has a lower estimate, but with no bids from qualified contractors, nobody is sure exactly what your cost will be.
- 7) DO WE ABSOLUTELY HAVE TO BUILD A NEW PLANT THREE (3) MILES INLAND OF THE EXISTING LOCATION? – The Coastal Commission would like the plant moved inland, but they have the same concerns about the proposed new lift station that is planned for the same location as the current plant. Many experts believe a catastrophic failure at a new lift station will be more damaging to the environment than if a new plant were built there. Ultimately, Morro Bay cannot be forced to build what the residents cannot afford. That is why we need written opposition to the proposed rate increases planned for May of 2018.
- 8) WHAT IS A PROP 218? – In order for the City to raise rates, a majority of rate payers/property owners must not object to the increases. So, as a rate payer and/or property owner, you **MUST OBJECT** to the increases **IN WRITING TO THE CITY CLERK**. If you do nothing, your failure to object in writing is counted as approval of the increases! That is why we really need your help in opposing this increase. Not opposing the Prop 218 will be counted as an approval.
- 9) WHAT EXACTLY SHOULD I DO TO OPPOSE THE INCREASES? – By law--the City will establish a 45-day period during which written objections can be submitted to the City Clerk by rate payers and/or parcel owners. If you do not submit your objection in writing, your inaction will be considered approval of the increased rates. We have been told this proposition is tentatively scheduled to start on May 1 and end mid-June 2018. If you want us to notify you when this 45-day period begins (and ends), please send CAL an email and put "NOTIFY ME OF 218" in the subject line. Our email address is: [Citizensforaffordableliving@gmail.com](mailto:Citizensforaffordableliving@gmail.com).
- 10) HOW ELSE CAN I OPPOSE THIS \$167M PROJECT? – Talk to all your friends and neighbors! Tell them about [www.CALMorroBay.com](http://www.CALMorroBay.com) and our FB Page and how the Prop 218 works. Have them email their questions to us. You can also help CAL get the word out by walking neighborhoods with us, staffing booths at grocery stores and other locations, as well as attending our weekly workshop meetings. We need all your help to defeat the pending Prop 218!