

## **Statement Describing the Reason for Impending Secondary Water Rate Increases**

Dear Secondary (Weber) Water User,

Utah legislature passed a bill this year (HB242), which requires all pressurized secondary (Weber) water providers to meter all secondary water connections. The end goal of the State is to mandate that all secondary water providers charge according to use based on a tiered system like culinary (drinking water) currently is. The District, along with many other secondary providers, fought this bill. We had been successful in prior years defeating bills like HB242, but due to the extreme drought we find ourselves in, along with the availability of federal funding; secondary water providers in Utah have lost the fight against metering. Secondary water providers have not been fighting against water conservation, rather, providers have been pushing for alternative methods of conserving water.

The legislature appropriated enough money from the federal government to assist entities with 70% of the expense of installing meters on secondary connections. The remaining 30% must be paid by the entities themselves. This means that the District, and most other pressurized secondary water providers in Utah, will have to raise irrigation rates in order to cover the remainder. The Federal deadline on spending this money is the end of 2026. In order for the District to use all of the grant money available, the District must install a meter on every secondary connection in four years. There is a chance that due to supply chain issues or labor shortages, the District may not be able to complete all the connections before the 2026 deadline. If this is the case, the District would have to cover 100% of the cost of installing the meters, and rates would have to reflect that.

In order to help absorb some of this expense, the District will forego doing capital improvement projects for the next four years, unless the District can obtain a grant to continue a limited number of capital projects in low-income areas of the District. The District will also have to raise irrigation rates by \$59 per connection in 2023, and then by the same amount in 2024. This will constitute a total increase of \$118 per connection. The current rate per acre of land with one connection is \$375 per year. This increase would put the price per acre with one connection at \$493 per year—a total increase of 31.5%. Once the meters are installed, the District will be able to eliminate this \$118 rate increase; however, due to the cost of maintaining the meters, increases imposed on the District by Weber Basin, and inflation, restoring rates to the current levels will not be possible. The District will hold a public hearing in December to discuss the rate increases.

The vast majority of existing secondary connections are one inch; however, if you have a larger connection and wish to retain it you will have to pay the difference in cost for the upgrade. Properties where the owner has blocked access to the master valve or water main by installing a shed, garage, swimming pool, retaining wall, planted large trees, etc. may have to be switched over to culinary water for irrigation use and be disconnected from the secondary water system. This will have to be determined on a case-by-case basis. If a secondary user would like to just disconnect from the irrigation system voluntarily, this may also be possible. Switching to culinary water entails the District disconnecting the customer's irrigation line from the secondary (Weber) water main line. The resident would then install, or have installed, an approved backflow assembly where the irrigation connection ties into the customer's culinary water line. This installation would then have to be inspected by the District prior to burying.

We understand that higher rates and construction work in your yards will create hardships, but the legislature has mandated metering and created financial and other penalties to force us to comply.

If you have any questions or comments, please scan the QR Code, or go to our website at [www.southdaviswater.us](http://www.southdaviswater.us) and click on "contact us" to submit them. You can also email the Trustees at the below listed addresses.

Best Regards,

South Davis Water District Board of Trustees

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