

Santa Margarita Water District



MEMORANDUM

TO: Board of Directors

DATE: February 19, 2016

FROM: Dan Ferons

SUBJECT: Delays in February Billing

DISCUSSION:

Mailing the February customers' bills is delayed due to challenges implementing the new rate structure including antiquated software requiring customization, missed deadlines from vendors and challenges with the test calculations. We are working diligently to ensure that the new rate structure is implemented accurately to avoid billing issues.

The majority of our customers are impacted. Customers that are regularly billed in the first three weeks of the month will receive their February bill at the end of the month. The regular billing cycle will resume in March, and affected customers will receive their March bill shortly after their February bill, potentially causing confusion. Customers will have the full regular 25 day period to pay each of their bills and no late fee will be incurred during that period.

Following are the actions that we are taking to communicate our customers:

- **February Bills**

- A message on the February bill informs customers of important billing information and asks them read the special insert, call customer service and/or visit the website for more information
- A special bill insert informs customers of the situation (both mail and e-bill bills)
- Envelope snipe(note on the outside of the envelope) informs customers that important information about their bill is enclosed

- **March Bills**

- A message on the March bill will clearly identify it as the March bill and asks customers to call customer service with any questions or visit our website for more information
- A envelope snipe clearly identifies this bill as their March bill, to help alleviate the confusion of receiving two bills so close together

- **Digital Communications**

- Information will be posted on the SMWD homepage and [billing webpage](#) by Monday, February 22
- Social media will be closely monitored to provide assistance and response to the impacted customers