

Nipomo begins pipeline process

Residents will be receiving letters asking them to confirm information on their properties, which will help assess payment

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Cynthia Lambert The Tribune

This week, Nipomo property owners should receive letters asking them to verify some details about their parcels.

The letter, from the Nipomo Community Services District, is one step in the process toward levying a tax that would fund the estimated \$25.8 million capital cost of a pipeline to bring water to Nipomo from Santa Maria.

The letters are being sent to about 6,600 owners of about 9,000 parcels, with owners of numerous properties receiving one letter per parcel, Nipomo services district General Manager Michael LeBrun said.

Later, district staff and consultants will use the information to determine how much each property owner would pay as part of an assessment district to build the pipeline.

The tax would vary depending on each parcel's size, zoning, current use and potential for future development.

Property owners would likely vote in the spring whether to approve the tax. The cost of the water delivered from Santa Maria would be covered through increased water rates, a separate process in which customers affected would have a chance to vote on increasing it.

Services district officials say Nipomo needs the pipeline to reduce the community's dependence on an underground aquifer — its only source of water — and to prevent saltwater intrusion, which is the pollution of a freshwater aquifer by seawater creeping underground and moving inland.

The plan has garnered opposition from some area residents, who have raised concerns over the project's overall cost and reliability of the Santa Maria water.

The project's cost has grown about \$500,000 to \$25.8 million because of an increase in the cost of design work and publicity. The actual cost of the construction itself has not changed, LeBrun said.

The letters ask property owners to verify that information about their property is correct. Some may be asked whether they plan to build more on their land.

Property owners are asked to correct any information about their property by Feb. 16. Four community workshops are planned to answer questions.

They are scheduled for 7 p.m. on Monday at Mesa Middle School, 2555 Halcyon Road, on the Nipomo Mesa; at 3 p.m. on Jan. 28 at Nipomo High School's Olympic Hall at 525 N. Thompson Road; at 6:30 p.m. on Jan. 30 in the Avila Room at the Woodlands/Trilogy Center, 1645 Trilogy Parkway; and another at 6:30 p.m. on Feb. 1 at Nipomo High.

<http://www.sanluisobispo.com/2012/01/19/1914426/nipomo-begins-pipeline-process.html>