

Commissioner's Statement on Portland's Utility Rate Increase

Colleagues, today I have the honor of presenting to you the proposed rate increases for the Portland Water Bureau and the Bureau of Environmental Services.

For the 3rd consecutive year, I directed our two utilities to keep the combined rate increase under 5%, and the bureaus have once again delivered. They have proposed a rate increase of just under 4.5%, or roughly \$4 per month for the typical customer.

This reflects our ongoing commitment to providing good value to our ratepayers, and to investing in basic services like replacing old pipes and preparing for the Big One.

A little more background on our budget.

The typical monthly bill is about \$100. About a third is for water, 2/3 for sewer/stormwater.

And as you'll see from the presentations, we provide good value to our customers. For example, we deliver 2 gallons of clean, safe and reliable water to almost a million people in the region for about a penny.

How do we stack up locally and nationally?

If you lived in Lake Oswego and Tigard, you'd pay more for your water. In a survey released yesterday by J.D. Power, customers across the West Coast reported an average monthly cost of water of \$79. That's more than double what the Water Bureau will be proposing here today.

On the sewer/stormwater side, the typical customer will pay just under \$70 a month. And a part of that is paying off the debt on the Big Pipe.

No one likes to pay more for a basic service, including me, but I am pleased that we have been able to stabilize rates for 3 straight years.

And I'm proud that our public utilities continue to invest in maintaining our system, while exercising discipline with ratepayer dollars. This year, for example, the General Fund picked up the cost of preservation work at Mount Tabor and water fountain operations.

There are a number of people I want to thank.

First, the Citizens' Utility Board of Oregon for their on-going partnership with Portland's public utilities.

The new Portland Utility Board for their thoughtful consideration of both bureaus' budgets.

And our budget analysts – Ryan Kinsella, Claudio Campuzano, and Melissa Merrell.

Next, the two Mikes, Mike Stuhr and Mike Jordan, and their dedicated teams at the Water Bureau and the Bureau of Environmental Services.

They serve Portland 24/7, 365 days a year—and I am proud to lead them.

Finally, my two staff liaisons—Jim Blackwood and Liam Frost.

Thank you.