

## ANNUAL RECALCULATION OF SEWER BILLS

Each year in July, your sewer bill is recalculated. This recalculation is based on winter quarter averaging. We base your winter quarter average (WQA) on your water use during the previous water meter reading months of December, January and February. We use these months because this is the time when outdoor water use is typically at its lowest.

Water usage is measured in increments of 100 cubic feet (CCF). One CCF is equivalent to 748 gallons. The typical Pima County household uses approximately 8 CCFs of water each month based on the WQA.

During fiscal year 2014/2015, all the sewer user fees we collected were used for the costs of providing wastewater reclamation services.

## SEWER BILL APPEALS

If you believe there was a different three-consecutive-month period, between July 1, 2014 and June 30, 2015, when your water usage was lower, please contact our Customer Service section at 520-724-6609. A customer service representative can determine if you are eligible to file an appeal for a reduced rate.

Please note that if your home was vacant for an extended period, the period during which your home was vacant cannot be used in the recalculation of your sewer bill.

### Ways to file an appeal of your sewer bill:

**On-line:** [www.pima.gov/wastewaterreclamation](http://www.pima.gov/wastewaterreclamation). Click on Billing Questions and scroll down and click on How can I appeal my sewer bill?

**By Phone:** 520-724-6609 (Monday – Friday, 7:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.)

**By Mail:** Finance Department- Customer Service  
201 N. Stone Ave., 5th Floor Tucson, AZ 85701-1207

**By Fax:** 520-770-4153

**By Email:** [wastewatercs@wrm.pima.gov](mailto:wastewatercs@wrm.pima.gov)



## SEWER VACANT RATE

If you are gone from your home for longer than a month, you could be eligible for our sewer vacant rate. This is a discounted rate through which you pay only the administrative fee portion of your sewer bill. To take advantage of this rate, you must contact Customer Service in advance at 520-724-6609. You can also apply for the vacant rate online at [www.pima.gov/wastewaterreclamation](http://www.pima.gov/wastewaterreclamation). Click on Billing Questions and scroll down and click on Do I have to pay for sewer if my home is vacant for longer than a month?

## WHY IS MY SEWER BILL HIGHER THAN MY WATER BILL?

Different water companies in Pima County charge different rates. Most customers pay more for their sewer bills than their water bills. We are often asked why this is. The answer is twofold: In most parts of the U.S., wastewater costs are more than potable water.

1. Area water companies pay a relatively small amount for their water supplies: groundwater and Central Arizona Project (CAP) water. The water companies incur costs associated with the pumping of groundwater and the conveyance of CAP water to this area. There are also costs associated with some minimal treatment of this water and with the distribution systems that bring the water to homes and businesses.
2. After the water is delivered to homes and businesses, we use that water, polluting it with household, commercial and human wastes. This wastewater is then conveyed to one of eight wastewater treatment facilities. Once it arrives at a treatment facility, it must be cleaned to meet state and federal

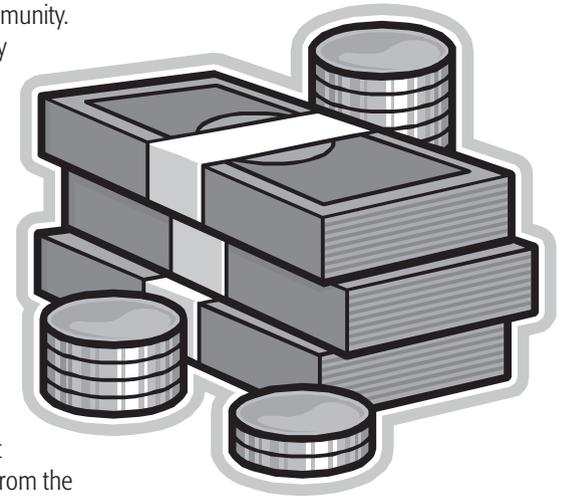


mandated standards before we can release it back into the environment or reuse it in our community. The level of treatment required for the cleaning of wastewater is much higher and considerably more expensive than the level of treatment needed for the natural potable water sources that are used by area water companies.

## COST REDUCTION SAVINGS

We know that you work hard for your money. This is why the Regional Wastewater Reclamation Department (RWRD) is focused on reducing its operating costs to keep your sewer fees as low as possible.

**Cost Savings:** In recent years, sewer fees have increased due to the costs associated with the Regional Optimization Master Plan (ROMP). ROMP was a program we undertook to meet state and federal mandates to improve the quality of our treated wastewater. It was a multi-faceted program that took seven years to complete. However, now that the ROMP is completed, we must pay the debt we incurred while making those improvements. We reduced the cost of the ROMP from the initial projection of \$720 million to the final cost of \$605 million. This is a cost savings of \$115 million. Planning for the ROMP began in 2006. The final construction of all regulatory compliance mandates was completed in 2013.



**In addition to this significant cost savings, the department continues to find ways to cut costs:**

**Fewer Employees:** In Fiscal Year (FY) 2011/2012, we had 512 full-time employees. Today, the number of full-time employees is 475.

**Lower Chemical Costs:** In FY 2011/2012, we spent \$4,546,000 in chemicals in our conveyance and treatment of wastewater. This fiscal year, we are on target to spend \$3,869,000.

**Reduced-Energy Costs:** In FY 2012/2013, 9.1% of our budget was spent in energy costs. In FY 2014/2015, energy costs account for 8.5% of our budget.

The Regional Wastewater Reclamation Department is working smarter to reduce costs to keep your sewer user bills as low as possible.



### Regional Wastewater Reclamation Department Contact Information

General Information ( <i>during regular business hours</i> ) .....	520-724-6500
Roach Control Hotline ( <i>Automated line, please provide requested information</i> ) .....	520-724-3401
Billing Section .....	520-724-6609
Sewer Emergencies .....	520-724-6500
To Report Odors .....	520-724-6500
Sewer Outreach Subsidy ( <i>Low-income bill assistance</i> ) .....	520-724-3794
Sewer Connection Information .....	520-724-6602
To Report Vandalism .....	911

You can also access this information and more from our website, [www.pima.gov/wastewaterreclamation](http://www.pima.gov/wastewaterreclamation)

### PIMA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

- Ally Miller, District 1
- Ramón Valadez, District 2
- Sharon Bronson, *Chair*, District 3
- Raymond J. Carroll, District 4
- Richard Elías, District 5

**COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR**  
Chuck Huckelberry