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## Outreach and Engagement Update

*Community and Government Affairs Committee*





## Proposed Rate Adjustment Outreach Strategy



# Western's Strategic Communications Objectives



Sustain Western Water's positive reputation



Enhance awareness of the value of Western Water's services



Timely, accurate delivery of content using tools based on customer preferences



Enhance and fortify Western Water's internal support and commitment



Increase positive coverage for Western Water's digital footprint

# STRATEGIC OVERVIEW

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- **District-wide approach**
- **Activation of proactive and reactive strategies**
- **Enhance internal coordination**
- **Focused partner education and engagement**
- **Customer education and engagement**





# GAINING CUSTOMER INSIGHTS

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## Pre-outreach survey

- August 19 through September 6
- Distributed to all active residential Western Water customers (print & digital)
- Statistically significant

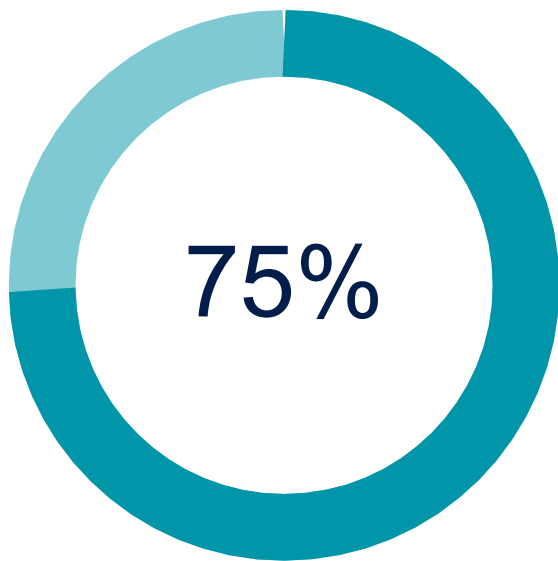
# INSIGHT GOALS

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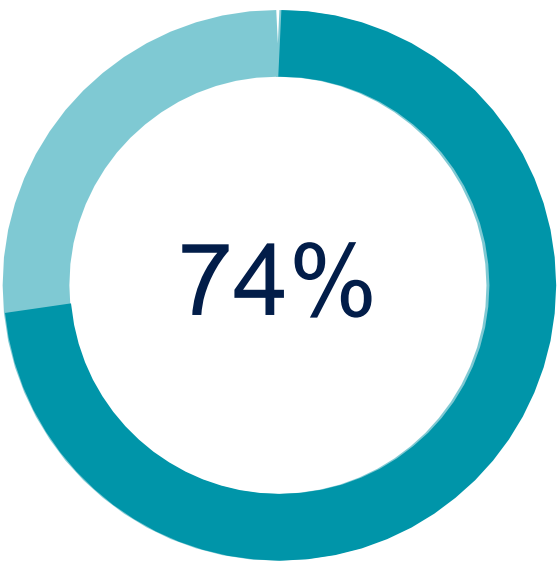
- Gauge alignment with customer priorities
- Learn customer engagement preferences
- Understand customer's billing experience



# KEY FINDINGS – PRIORITY ALIGNMENT

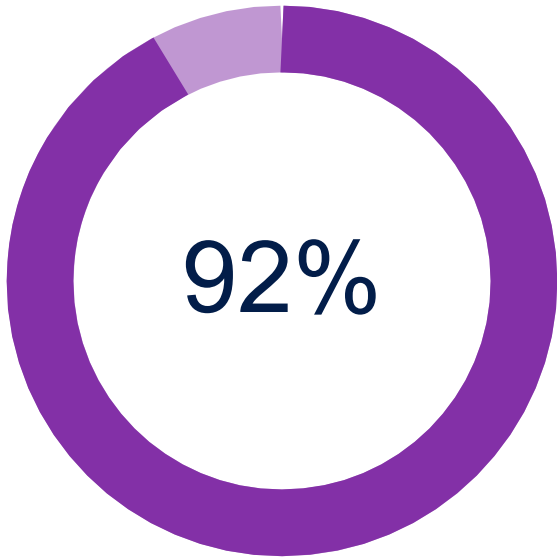


**Customers agree Western Water's top priority is securing and delivering reliable, high-quality water**

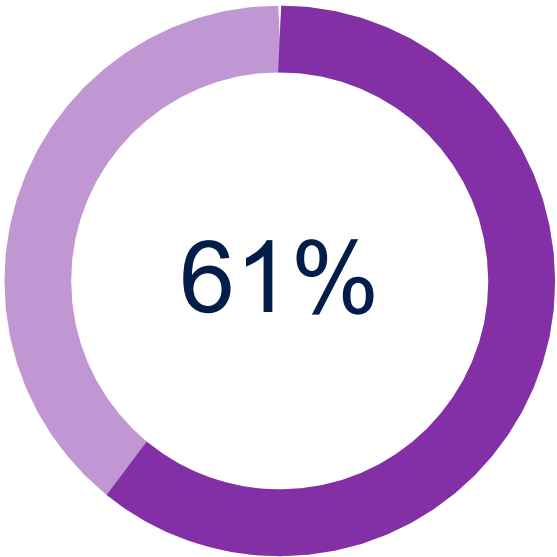


**Customers believe Western Water provides good service and value for the amount charged**

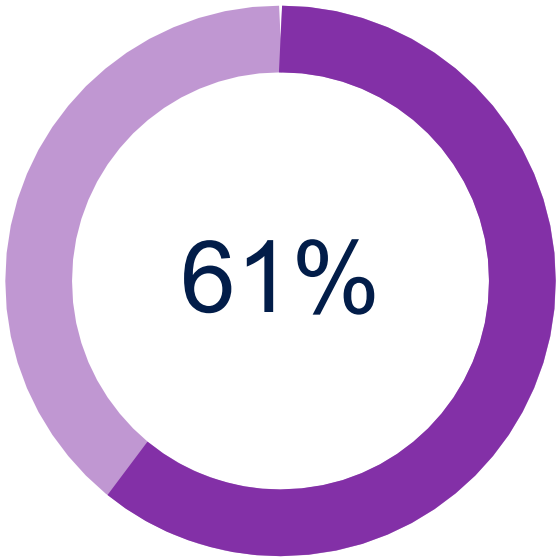
# KEY FINDINGS - ENGAGEMENT



**Customer want ongoing communications about their rates**



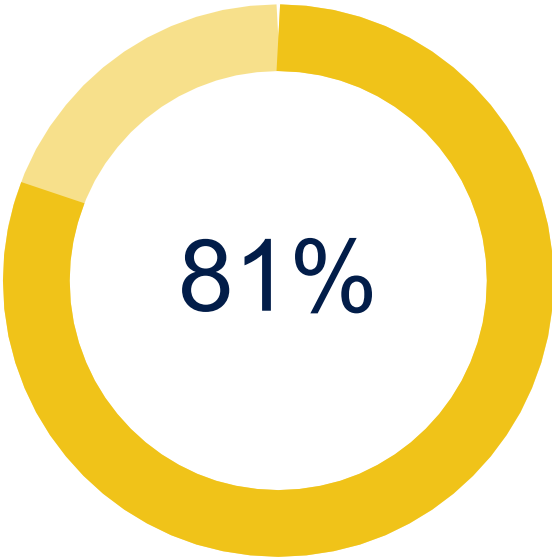
**Customers are unlikely to attend in-person meetings about rates**



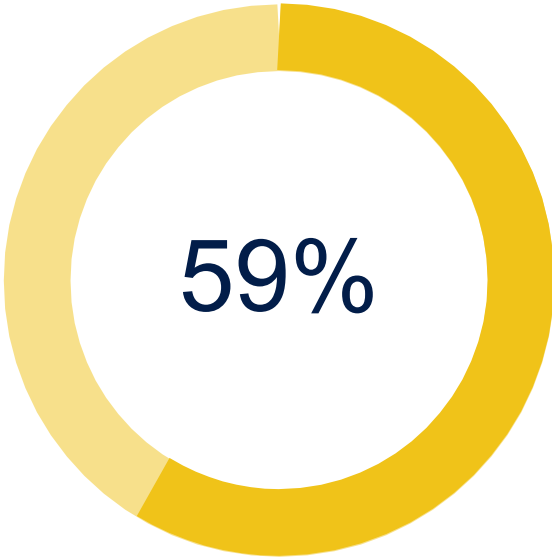
**Customers prefer to receive rate updates via email**



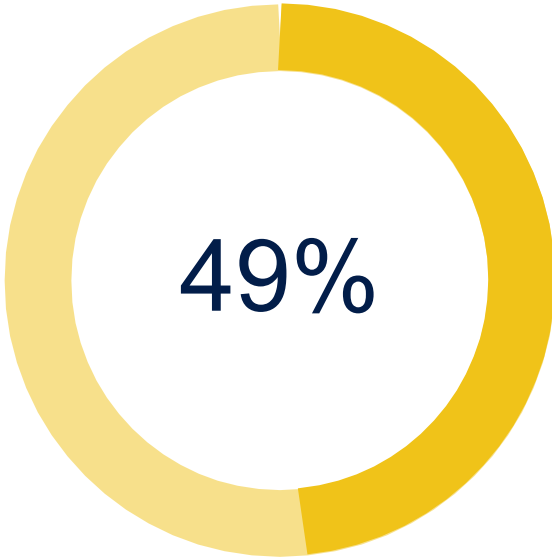
# KEY FINDINGS – BILLING EXPERIENCE



**Customers know that  
when they use more  
water, their bill goes up**



**Customers understand  
the fixed charges on their  
bill**



**Customers understand  
the complexity of their  
water rates**

# FOUR-PHASED OUTREACH APPROACH



# PHASE 1: EDUCATE

## August 2024 to November 2024

- Establish internal project team
- Develop comprehensive outreach plan
- Identify roles and responsibilities
- Outreach will focus on educating customers on the value of their water service – going beyond the drop
- Raise awareness of service value
- Educate
- Highlight Impact
- Inspire emotion



## PHASE 2:

### ANNOUNCE AND INFORM

#### December 2024 to March 2025

- Begin high-level stakeholder education
- Outreach will focus on announcing upcoming rate adjustment, fee education and informing customers/stakeholders:
  - What is a water budget?
  - Why do I see other charges/fees on my bill?
  - Why are adjustments necessary?



# PHASE 3:

## ENGAGE AND DECIDE

### March to May 2025

- Host public workshop/hearing(s)
- Board to consider adopting new rates
- Outreach will focus on engaging customers and community partners:
  - Will this affect other fees/service charges?
  - What is being proposed?
  - How will the potential change affect me (customer)?
  - Where do I get more information?





# PHASE 4: CUSTOMER FOLLOW UP

## June 2025 (ongoing)

- Proactive education from Customer Services
  - When will the new rates go into effect?
  - How will the change affect a bill?
- Ongoing outreach will focus on
  - What programs are available to customers?
  - How can customers take control of their usage?
  - How is Western Water using customer dollars responsibly, transparently, and efficiently?



# IMMEDIATE NEXT STEPS

## December 2024

- Initiate strategic partner education
- Board members updates

## January 2025

- Finalize rate scenarios
- Announcing rate-setting process and how customers can stay informed
- Additional messaging focus: bill education and cost of service





CIFP

## Quarterly Update

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# CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

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- North Well
- Gavilan Hills Fill Station
- Sewer Line Leak Detection  
(Smoke Testing)

# NORTH WELL

- Significant construction outreach is complete; ongoing communication with residents, as needed
- Immediate next step – appreciate neighbors for their patience during improvements





# GAVILAN HILLS WATER FILL STATION

- Fill station went live in September
- New signage at fill station
- 'Discontinued' signage at old fill stations
- Postcard mailer to the surrounding Gavilan Hills neighborhood
- Updated information on the project website
- On-going communication at local community meetings providing updates on the fill station

## HOW TO PURCHASE WATER

1. Secure hose to fill station and your water container.
2. Select the outlet you would like to dispense water from.
3. Select the amount of water desired.
4. Process payment with a credit card.
5. Water will dispense.

### Requirements:

- Credit card
- Attachment (2.5" fire hose or garden hose)

### Questions?

- 916.515.1104  
Monday - Friday  
8 AM to 5 PM
- [customerservice@westernwater.com](mailto:customerservice@westernwater.com)
- [WesternWaterCA.gov](http://WesternWaterCA.gov)



# SEWER LINK LEAK DETECTION (SMOKE TESTING)

- Western Water will perform “smoke testing” on sanitary sewer lines in the service area
- During “smoke testing,” the contractor blows a smoke-like vapor into the sanitary sewer system
- This work will begin in late October/early November
- **Notification methods:** postcards, door hangers, auto-calls, public education





Questions?

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