



16 April 2026

To: Assessee
Assessee 2
Mailing1
City, State Zip_1

**DIXON RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT
NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING AND
PROPOSED DITCH MAINTENANCE FEE INCREASE**

Public Hearing Tuesday, June 9, 2026 at 12:00 NOON
District Conference Room (Suite 109) at 1170 N. Lincoln St., Dixon, CA 95620

Dear Assessee,

Dixon Resource Conservation District (District) is proposing to increase its ditch maintenance fees to make rates fair and equitable under the requirements of Proposition 218 (California Constitution Article XIII D, Section 6) (“Prop 218”). Ditch maintenance fees provide funding for ongoing maintenance and repair activities as well as replacement of aging infrastructure. The current rate of \$4.00/acre does not cover the costs incurred by the District to complete these activities.

Proposed Ditch Maintenance Fee Schedule

	Current Fee	Recommended Rate					Average Fee
		2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	
Drainage Fee (\$/Ac)	\$4.00	\$6.00	\$7.00	\$8.00	\$8.00	\$8.00	\$ 7.40
% Change		50.0%	16.7%	14.3%	0.0%	0.0%	

Historically, the District has allowed annual ditch operations expenses to significantly exceed ditch operations revenues. The District cannot sustain this into the future.

The primary reasons a ditch maintenance fee increase is needed:

- Increased ditch maintenance costs
- Increased costs for District to respond to proposed development
- Need to return to adequate District reserves
- Reduced offsets from professional services revenues

As part of the rate study, the District Board of Directors (Board) directed staff to analyze the prior five years and the current year costs and revenues, as well as plan for the next five years. The Board received this information over the last few months and looked at different ways to minimize the rate increase. After a draft rate study was presented to the Board at a regularly scheduled meeting on March 10, 2026, the District invited the landowners to a March 30th workshop on the rate study. This provided an informal way to gather feedback from our rate payers. If you were unable to attend this meeting or would like a full copy of the rate study, all materials can be found at <https://www.dixonrcd.org/proposed-ditch-maintenance-fee-increase-2026-march-30th-meeting> Upon request District will mail copy of the Final Rate Study to ditch rate payers.

Under Prop 218, the District cannot increase the current ditch maintenance fee, a property-related fee, without completing the public voting process. The Board will hold a public hearing on the proposed rate adjustments on **Tuesday, June 9, 2026 at 12:00 NOON** at the District Conference Room (Suite 109) located at 1170 N. Lincoln St., Dixon, CA. Public participation is welcomed and encouraged.

In addition, as the owner, or customer of record of a parcel affected by the proposed ditch maintenance rate increase, you have the right to submit a written protest. Under Prop 218, a property-related fee may not be increased if a majority of property owners submit written protests. To be counted, a written protest must contain a written statement in opposition of the proposed fee, the name of the owner/customer of record submitting the protest, parcel identification (physical address or parcel number), an original signature, and a legibly printed name of the signer. Courtesy protest forms are available at the District Office, however your own template can be used as long as it includes all information above.

Protests must be received by the close of the Hearing on June 9th to be counted. Protests may be mailed to **Attn: Ditch Fee Protest** to 1170 N. Lincoln St, Ste 110, Dixon, CA 95620 or hand delivered to the District office or to the **Public Hearing: Tuesday, June 9, 2026 at 12:00 NOON** at the District Conference Room (Suite 109) located at 1170 N. Lincoln St., Dixon, CA. Emailed, faxed or photocopied ballots will not be counted. Only one ballot per parcel will be counted. If a majority of property owners or customers of record do not protest the increase, then property owners will receive an official ballot in the mail to vote YES or NO on the proposed adjustments to the fees.

The District Board and Staff will continue to seek ways to balance property tax revenues and fees with the costs of essential operations and services so that the District ditches are operated and maintained in the most cost-effective manner possible.

Please visit our website at <https://www.dixonrcd.org/drainage-services> or contact me at 707.678.1655 x102. Thank you, in advance, for your participation in this public process.

Sincerely,



Kelly Huff
District Manager

Encl: Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Dixon Resource Conservation District (District)
Proposed Ditch Maintenance Fee Increase

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

The following are answers to the most frequently asked questions about the District’s proposed fee increase.

Q: What does the Ditch Maintenance Fee pay for?

A: The Ditch Maintenance Fee primarily pays for on the ground work. See detail below:

- excavation, weed spraying, right of way maintenance and debris removal (70%)
- staff time for planning and overseeing all activities related to ditch maintenance & ditch billing (12%)
- materials & services, including drainage & fees or cost-share according to agreements with other agencies, legal & engineering fees specific to ditch operations, maintenance or upgrades of the existing system (18%)

Q: There is not a ditch on my property. Why do I pay this fee?

A: If the District drains did not exist, many parts of the 30,000+ acre service area would experience prolonged flooding during most storm events, with impacts to public safety and infrastructure. Even properties that do not have a direct connection benefit as the District’s 70.5 miles of drains allow the area to drain more quickly. This is why when the drains were constructed during the 1950’s and 1960’s, landowners signed mutual agreements authorizing the projects and agreeing to pay an annual per acre assessment to carry out ditch maintenance.

Q: Why does the District need to raise the fee now?

A: Over the last five years, the District has allowed annual Ditch Operations Expenses to significantly exceed the Ditch Operations Revenues (see below). The District cannot sustain this into the future.

	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	TOTAL
Annual Ditch Operations Revenues	\$159,059	\$155,407	\$156,870	\$156,336	\$159,447	\$787,119
Ditch Operations (Ditch) Expenses	\$169,790	\$168,388	\$152,690	\$213,596	\$233,916	\$938,380
Ditch Capital Improvements	\$0	\$0	\$21,814	\$6,467	\$47,834	\$76,114
Ditch Net Balance with Ditch Capital Improvements	-\$10,731	-\$12,981	-\$17,634	-\$63,727	-\$122,303	-\$227,375

Q: When would the rate go into effect?

A: If approved, we would expect the rate increase to go into effect beginning December 1, 2026.

Q: How much would the increase be to the average landowner?

A: The rate would increase from \$4/ac to \$6/ac in 2027 and then increase more gradually up to \$8/ac in 2029. Each rate increase must be justified by staff annually. The proposed rates establish the maximum rate that could be charged in any given year, without initiating another Proposition 218 process (Prop 218). This means that the rate may increase more slowly if all anticipated costs are not incurred. Under the proposed rates, for a 40-acre parcel, the cost would increase by \$80/yr in 2027 and up to \$160/yr in 2029 through 2031.

Q: Why are there a protest and an election?

A: The Ditch Maintenance fee is considered a “property-related” fee under Prop 218, which requires a two phased process. The first phase is a protest vote. If 50% + 1 protests (by parcel) are submitted to the agency, the Board is not allowed to call for an election. If a majority protest is not received in June, the Board authorizes a special election with mailed ballots. For the rate increase to take effect the majority of the returned ballots, weighted according to the proportional financial obligation, must vote in favor (“yes”) of the rate increase.

Q: How much does a Prop 218 process like this cost?

A: While it is hard to know the exact final costs now, it is estimated that the rate setting process will cost approximately \$60,000 in staff time, legal counsel, outside engineering, and mailing costs.

Q: What happens if the proposed rate fails?

A: If the proposed rate increase fails, the District Board would have to reevaluate the level of services provided on all projects, including ditch maintenance. The Board would have to evaluate what level of fees the landowners are willing to pay in order to decide what services can be provided. A new Prop 218 process would have to be initiated with a new rate study, hearing and election process.

Q: If I disagree with the rate increase, what are my next steps?

A: If you disagree with the proposed increase, you may choose to protest the rate increase on the enclosed form. The District recommends that you come to the Hearing to voice your opinions in person so that the concerns may be addressed and considered. If you still disagree with the proposed rate increase after the Hearing and the Board moves forward with an election, you may vote “no” on the ballot you receive.

Q: If I agree with the rate increase, what are my next steps?

A: If you agree with the proposed increase, ignore the attached protest form. The District recommends that you come to the Hearing to voice your opinions in person. If the Board chooses to move forward with an election after the Hearing, you may vote “yes” on the ballot you receive.

Q: Why does the District need \$515,000 in Reserve Funds?

A: The District’s reserves are twofold. A minimum balance of one hundred & sixty thousand dollars (\$160,000) is used to maintain the annual cash flow for the District. Three hundred & fifty-five thousand dollars (\$355,000) is specifically allocated for equipment & capital improvements such as replacing aging ditch infrastructure.

Q: What is the capital improvements money being saved for?

A: Within the rate study, the District has identified \$75,000 for equipment reserves, \$61,000 for four specific high priority capital improvement projects on the District’s facilities. Capital improvement reserves also include savings for future flood damage repair & emergency projects on District facilities as well as cost-share on regional projects.

Q: What other services does the District provide for its landowners?

A: The District assists landowners & tenants with resource concerns, whether it is habitat planting or understanding new regulations for groundwater supply and water quality. The District partners with other agencies, such as Solano RCD & USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), to help customers achieve their resource goals.

Q: If the new rate is approved, what will my rate be in 2032 and beyond?

A: \$8/ac unless a new rate setting process is initiated.

Q: If the new rate is approved, will the District still pursue other options to help offset costs in the future?

A: Yes, the District Board will continue to look at every avenue possible to keep the Ditch Maintenance fee as low as possible. The Board is hopeful that this rate increase, if approved, will last longer than the projected 5 years.

Q: How does the District ensure that maintenance costs related to irrigation water conveyance and use in District drains are fairly allocated?

A: Ditch members that utilize the District ditches to convey and re-capture irrigation water are required to obtain an encroachment permit which requires them to assume maintenance responsibilities for the portion of ditch that could be impacted by their operation.

Q: What are examples of the higher level of service being expected now versus the past?

A: Since the drains were installed in the 1950s, historically landowners and operators along the system have provided high levels of in-kind maintenance work that has helped keep maintenance fees low. Many landowners and operators continue to assist with weed control on right of ways & debris removal at culvert inlets etc. However, there are increasing situations where landowners/operators are expecting the District to assume these activities.