



News Release

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ALCOSAN ANNOUNCES NEW RATES, WHICH ARE LOWER THAN PREVIOUS ESTIMATES

Increases are needed to meet regulatory requirements to improve the wastewater system Clean Water Assistance Fund is available to low-income homeowners

November 17, 2017 – The Allegheny County Sanitary Authority Board of Directors yesterday approved a four-year rate structure that will pay for the Clean Water Plan to improve the quality of the water in the region’s rivers and streams. These increases are significantly lower than previously estimated.

The board chose to set rates for a four-year period because it allows residents, businesses and municipalities that are part of the ALCOSAN system plan their budgets for the long term without the prospect of surprise increases.

Beginning in January 2018, the average residential customer who uses 12,000 gallons of water per quarter and whose bill from ALCOSAN was \$390 in 2017, will pay \$419 in 2018. That is an increase of 7.5% which comes to \$29.22 per year or \$2.43 per month more. In 2019, 2020 and 2021, rates will increase 7% each year, with the cost to the average customer being \$513 per year or \$42.75 per month by 2021.

ALCOSAN’s rate is computed two ways, the per-gallon rate and the customer service charge. The current rate of \$6.91 per 1,000 gallons of water used will rise to \$7.42 per 1,000 gallons for 2018. The quarterly customer service charge, \$14.51 in 2017, will be \$15.60 in 2018.

ALCOSAN’s charges do not include the amount added by each municipality to maintain local infrastructure.

Low-income homeowners in the ALCOSAN territory can reduce their bills by applying to the Authority’s Clean Water Assistance Fund. The fund has made available \$1 million to help low-income families and individuals pay their wastewater treatment bills. Details of the application process are available at www.alcosan.org and through the Dollar Energy Fund, at dollarenergy.org.

“Although we would have preferred not to have to raise our rates, I am pleased that our staff’s hard work and sound fiscal management during the past four years mean the increases are not nearly as high as the last round,” said ALCOSAN Board Chairperson Sylvia C. Wilson. “These increases are necessary to pay for the many improvements ALCOSAN is continuing to carry out to improve the efficiency of its system, which includes 83 municipalities. ALCOSAN is under a federal consent decree, currently being re-negotiated, to take these and other actions to eliminate overflows of stormwater and untreated sewage during heavy rain and snow melt.

“Without the increase, ALCOSAN’s ability to take on responsibility for more than 200 more miles of large sewers and pump stations would be threatened, creating a greater burden on municipalities and their residents,” continued Wilson. “ALCOSAN’s funding for municipal improvement projects would be imperiled, its cost of borrowing for capital projects

would increase and it would be impossible to meet the legal requirements of the federal government without overburdening our customers.

“We fervently hope that all low-income homeowners in the ALCOSAN territory apply to our Clean Water Assistance Fund through Dollar Energy Fund to receive the help they need in paying these new rates,” said Wilson. “But no matter your income, know that you are part of fixing our system and giving the Pittsburgh region the world-class rivers and streams that we all deserve.”

ALCOSAN is one of the region’s premier environmental and public health organizations, treating wastewater for 83 Allegheny County communities, including the City of Pittsburgh. The authority, which is Green by Mission and Green by Choice, enhances the community’s quality of life and safety by working to protect drinking water, rivers and streams, and making the Pittsburgh region a great place to live, work and play. ALCOSAN’s 59-acre treatment plant processes up to 250 million gallons of wastewater daily and is one of the largest such facilities in the Ohio River Valley.