

August 12, 2026

Christian Clegg, City Manager
City of Bakersfield
1600 Truxtun Avenue
Bakersfield, CA 93301

RE: City Sewer Rates

Mr. Clegg,

On behalf of the Kern County Board of Supervisors, I want to convey that the County remains committed to working with the City of Bakersfield to identify alternatives to the increased sewer rates for the benefit of our shared constituents.

The County stands behind the reverse validation action filed on June 15, 2026, to help ensure sewer rates are lawful, fair and affordable. We recently learned that SEIU has joined the lawsuit on behalf of its members, many of whom rent or own homes in Bakersfield, as well as on behalf of the ratepaying public generally. We remain hopeful that the City will be willing to discuss alternatives to the sewer rate increases adopted by the City Council on May 27, 2026, without the need for further court intervention. However, as of the date of this letter, the City has not engaged in meaningful discussions with County staff on this matter, and we are advised by our counsel that the City's attorneys have also not been willing to engage in discussions about potential resolution of the lawsuit.

The County fully understands and supports the City's need for repairing and upgrading the community's sewer system to maintain safety and reliability. However, the County maintains that the repair and upgrade fees passed on to our shared constituents should be lawful, fair, and affordable for everyone. The County has publicly presented funding alternatives to the City Council and has shared them directly with you. We would welcome a meeting with City staff to further discuss reasonable options that achieve a more affordable rate for the taxpayers.

We request a public discussion no later than August 26, 2026, which is the last day the City can notify the Auditor-Controller of a reduced rate for property tax billing, and is also the date of the City's next Council meeting. The County respectfully requests that the City add an agenda item to the August 26th Council meeting or hold a special meeting to consider such action, and to allow more time for the County to present its position than merely the general public comment period.

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As stated previously, the County stands behind the reverse validation action and is prepared to take any and all legal recourse, including injunctive relief; but would prefer to resolve this matter amicably and without judicial intervention. After all, we all want what is best for our constituents. Please notify me by Monday, August 17th if you plan to include this item on the August 26th City Council agenda or hold a special meeting. We welcome the chance for staff-level discussions as well. I look forward to hearing from you.

Respectfully,



Nancy Anderson
County Administrative Officer
County of Kern