



# Sacramento Utility Rate Study

**Community Outreach & Core Messaging**

March 25, 2026



# Who is Raftelis?

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**The most experienced** utility financial and management consulting practice in the nation.

With more than...

**190**

consultants across the U.S.

Raftelis has provided financial/organizational assistance for

**1,700+**

public agencies and utilities

that serve more than

**25%**

of the U.S. population

including the agencies serving

**41**

of the nation's 50 largest cities



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# Agenda

- 1. The Communications Challenge/Opportunity**
- 2. Discussion: Testing the Core**
  - a) Rationale**
  - b) Messages**
- 3. How URAC Can Help**
- 4. Next Steps**

# The Communications Challenge / Opportunity



## The Reality

We will ask for necessary multi-year rate adjustments during an election year. Residents may still be feeling the pressure of inflation and rate fatigue, and the City is catching up after eight years without an increase.



## The Good News

We have a strong story to tell about protecting public health, fixing aging infrastructure, and noting that utility funds cannot be used for general funded needs like police, fire, parks, etc.



## The Strategy

We will meet people where they are, fostering two-way communications and using existing city-owned channels and community and business meetings to keep residents informed.

# Discussion: Testing the **Core Rationale**

## **Aging Infrastructure**

Some of the City's water and sewer pipes are over 100 years old. The systems that clean our drinking water and move wastewater for treatment elsewhere are old and need major repairs or replacement.

## **Cost of Delay**

Planned upgrades are much less expensive than paying premium prices for emergency repairs when systems suddenly fail.

## **Rising Costs**

Since the last rate change in 2020, prices for materials, chemicals, and labor have significantly increased because of inflation and other factors.

## **Strict Regulations**

State and federal rules set increasingly strict water quality and environmental standards. Meeting these rules costs a lot of money.

## **Water Resiliency**

Not only does the City need to address current system issues, but it must also prepare for future water needs to avoid service disruption and prepare for drought years.

# Discussion: Testing the **Core Messages**

## **Value & Safety**

Clean water and reliable sewers protect our health and make modern life possible.

## **Need for Action**

Much of our infrastructure is aging. We delayed updates to keep costs low, but now those bills are due.

## **Accountability**

State law requires your bill to only pay for water and sewer services. The utility does not make a profit. It can only collect what it costs to run the system.

## **Affordability**

Help is available through the Sacramento Utility Rate Assistance program for families who need support paying bills.

# How URAC Members Can Help

1

## Ambassador Pairings

Join a Community Ambassador at a local event to answer questions about the need for smart investment in our critical water infrastructure.

2

## Neighborhood Roadshows

Take our pocket talking points and give a brief update at your local Neighborhood Association meeting.

3

## URAC Voices

Help the City create informal content for social media where you can explain your experience on the URAC.

4

## Guest Editorial

Help us co-author an opinion piece for a local newspaper explaining the rigorous review process this commission conducted.



## Next Steps

- 1** We will refine the public messages based on your feedback today.
- 2** We will create digital tools, bill inserts, and the formal Proposition 218 notice.
- 3** We will return in the summer once the final rate numbers are ready.



# Thank you!

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