



County Service Area 3 Zone A (CSA 3A)

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### **What is a special district?**

A special district is a form of local government created to provide a specific public service(s) to an area within defined boundaries.

### **What services are provided by special districts that are managed by the San Joaquin County Public Works Department?**

The Public Works Department manages special districts which can provide one or a combination of the following services to the properties within a district's boundaries:

- Water
- Sewer
- Storm drainage
- Street lighting
- Nitrate treatment
- Lighting & landscape maintenance
- Household hazardous waste
- Storm water pollution prevention

### **When and why was CSA 3A formed?**

CSA 3A was formed in 1977 to provide lighting and storm drainage services to the properties within the district's boundaries.

### **Where does the funding for CSA 3A come from and how does it operate?**

The district receives a small annual distribution of County property taxes and interest (approximately \$80) in addition to assessments paid by the property owners within the district's boundaries. The assessments are placed on each property owner's tax bills. These two items comprise the district's revenue, which is used to pay for operation and maintenance of the storm drain and lighting systems and administration of the district.

### **How is the assessment determined?**

Costs for the district are apportioned to each property based upon a Single Family Equivalent (SFE) unit, which refers to the benefit a typical single-family dwelling unit would receive. Based on the current rates, 1 SFE = \$18 for storm drainage and \$17 for lighting. All properties within the district's boundaries pay their fair share of the costs through their annual assessments.

### **Why do rates need to be raised?**

Current revenues are not sufficient to cover operating and maintenance expenses. Since the last rate adjustment, there have been increases to PG&E rates and other operating expenses. Several key pieces of equipment used to operate the storm drain system are in need of replacement and there are currently not adequate reserves to cover these costs.

**When was the last time rates were adjusted?**

Rates have not been adjusted since the 1989-1990 fiscal year.

**What happens now that rate increases were not approved?**

Service levels within the District will be reduced to generate cost savings. Without significant service reductions, all of the District's system replacement reserves will be depleted by on-going operational and maintenance costs within the next few years. To extend the time frame to insolvency, the following cost reduction measures will be considered:

- All streetlights will be de-energized (turned off)
- Elimination of after-hours and weekend service calls
- Elimination of regular maintenance
- Delayed response to service calls during normal working hours
- Postponement of equipment replacement

**What happens if equipment breaks and there are not sufficient reserves to replace it?**

The County will repair the equipment to the extent possible with the funds available. If there are insufficient funds to adequately repair equipment, the system will not function effectively during storm events. This may affect drainage conditions on the road.

**Who decides which lights are de-energized?**

The County has an established criteria for prioritizing which street lights remain in operation. These include optimizing public safety and consideration for traffic patterns. In this District, all lights will need to be turned off because current revenue will only pay the cost to keep poles in place and will not cover costs for any electricity.

**How can I get the streetlights turned back on and service levels restored?**

Restoring previous service levels will require a petition signed by a majority of the District's property owners to reconsider increased service charges. This will trigger another ballot process unless a **unanimous** petition is received from property owners representing **every property** in the District indicating support for the increase. Only property owners may petition and vote to increase rates. If you rent the home and do not want services reduced, contact your landlord.

**Where can I get more information?**

You may call your County Supervisor Katherine Miller at (209) 468-3113. You may also call Alicia Connelly with Public Works at (209) 953-7150.