

# Universal Water Meter Announcement FAQ's

I know many residents in Area D has several questions regarding the announcement of the 2.8 Million dollar grant for a Universal water meter program. Already there are some misleading information that is being circulated on Social Media that is further cause concerns among residents.

First this \$2.8 million dollar grant is to cover the installation of approx 1,160 water meters for those households that are connected to the Campbell River Water System. I know for some folks they are not sure where they get their water from so the easiest is do you pay a flat rate of over \$1,100 per year and do you pay your bill to the SRD. If that answer is yes then you are connected to the Campbell River water system. If you are paying your water bill to the Comox Valley Regional District then you are already on a water meter and a different water system they have been using water meters for years.

Since 2018 I am well aware that approx 137 homes have installed water meters. While I am still working out the details with SRD staff and preparing the required motions for the Boards approval the answer is yes those property owners will be seeing a credit but beyond that I cannot provide any further details at this time. ***Again I ask for residents to be patient as there is also a bylaw that needs to be amended which also takes time.***

There is concern that the current grant of \$2.8 million will not cover the costs and that some homeowners might miss out on this opportunity. **The Strathcona Regional District believes that amount is sufficient as this grant is \$400,000 more than what previous applications were asking for.**

I know there are residents who would like to know when does this project start and what are the timelines for installations. ***At this time those questions cannot be answered with much detail.***

Now that the funding has been secured the Strathcona Regional District will be preparing documents for public tender. Once the successful vendor has been chosen more information will be available to the public.

In the meantime the City of Campbell River Water department will be doing some prep work to locate all the service connections.

This is a big project that will take time to complete. I know many residents are anxious and for good reason so I am asking residents to be patient.

**It is time to adopt a more fair way of paying for water and water meters are a more fair way to charge for water.**

Once a water meter is installed households will be billed every quarter. At the current billing for those on water meters the minimum quarterly charge is approx \$ 157 per quarter. Many households that are are currently on water meters are saving money when compared to the flat rate method.

More details for water rates can be found at

<https://srd.ca/services/water/water-rates-faqs/>

There is the rumour around Area D that Storey Creek Golf course is not on a water meter and that some feel they have caused the drastic increase in the flat rate increases that we saw back in 2018. This is not true. Storey Creek Golf course does not get their water from Area D.

**Water meters will be mandatory** as there are other reason for moving in this direction. Currently Area D has a water infrastructure that is now well beyond its expected life span. More than 75% of the water infrastructure is now 50 plus years old and its time to start doing replacements. Water meters will vastly help in strategic planning to determining where are the worse leaks in the system.

In addition, while the Campbell River Water Shed is very well managed by BC Hydro there is increasing pressure for more conservation due to the changing weather patterns and the lack of rainfall. Last year the Campbell River Water shed was at its lowest in 50 years and it did not start to recover until mid Nov. The current weather trend is that the Campbell River Water Shed will experience the same stage 4 drought conditions as it did last year. These conditions are making it very difficult to balance water consumption from consumers, balance the need to maintain healthy river flows to maintain fish habitat, and of course generate the much-needed hydro for the growing Regional District.

While I appreciate your concerns most residents in Area D are thrilled. This is an opportunity to bring the cost of water down to a more affordable price and to play a more active role in how water is being used in the Regional District.

If anyone has concerns or questions please send me an email. My email address is [jrice@srd.ca](mailto:jrice@srd.ca)