ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT

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Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ): Understanding Your 2027 Solid Waste Collection Rates

1. Why are solid waste collection rates changing for 2027?

The cost of providing reliable solid waste, recycling, and organic waste collection, transportation, processing, and disposal services has risen across all sectors due to inflation, higher operational expenses, and regulatory compliance requirements (such as SB 1383).

Under the franchise agreement with **South Tahoe Refuse Company (STR)** and the guidelines set by the **South Lake Tahoe Basin Waste Management Authority (JPA)**, the 2027 rate cycle is a **Base Year**, requiring a comprehensive, full cost-of-service analysis.

2. Is refuse collection service mandatory?

Yes. Solid waste collection service is mandatory under El Dorado County Code Chapter 8.42 (see El Dorado County Code of Ordinances). Property owners and occupants are required to subscribe to approved solid waste collection services to protect public health, safety, and community sanitation.

3. How are refuse collection rates set and reviewed?

- **The 3-Year Rate Cycle:** Refuse rates follow a three-year cycle. Base years involve an in-depth review of actual costs and revenues, while interim years utilize pre-authorized formula-based adjustments.
- **Independent Financial Review:** STR submitted its Base Year Rate Application on May 28, 2026, requesting a combined revenue shortfall increase. The JPA contracted with independent financial consultants **Crowe Advisory LLC** to thoroughly audit and analyze STR's application against audited financial statements, historical trends, and the JPA's *Rate Setting Policies and Procedures Manual*.
- **Modifications:** Crowe's independent review successfully reduced STR's original requested increase by removing one-time costs, adjusting inflated general and administrative expenses, re-evaluating yard waste and trucking strategies, and aligning projections with actual operational data.

4. What are the key cost drivers behind the rate adjustment?

The approved rate adjustments reflect increases in several critical operational areas:

- **Direct Labor & Benefits:** Incorporates cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs) to retain qualified staff, rising health insurance premiums (6%), and increases in workers' compensation expenses (26.13%).
- **Disposal & Processing Fees:** Significant increases in landfill tipping fees at Lockwood and Carson City landfills, alongside necessary shifts in processing facilities for construction and demolition (C&D) debris and yard waste to meet environmental standards (such as CalGreen and SB 1383).
- **General Insurance & Fuel:** Escalating premiums for general liability insurance and fuel costs driven by diesel price trends.

5. What are the approved 2027 rate increases by jurisdiction?

Following Crowe's adjustments and JPA recommendations, the approved rate changes effective **January 1, 2027**, vary by member agency due to differences in franchise fees and service costs:

- **City of South Lake Tahoe:** 11.46% increase
- **Douglas County:** 9.42% increase
- **El Dorado County:** 9.29% increase

El Dorado County (Area A) Rate Examples:

- **Residential Unlimited Service:** Increases from $52.55 to **$57.43** per month (an increase of $4.88)
- **Residential 32-Gallon Can/Bag:** Increases from $11.01 to **$12.03** per month (an increase of $1.02)
- **Commercial Per Cubic Yard:** Increases from $63.01 to **$68.86** per month (an increase of $5.85)

6. How will rates be adjusted in 2028 and 2029 (Interim Years)?

Beginning January 1, 2028, and January 1, 2029, rates will be adjusted automatically using an adopted **Interim-Year Rate Adjustment Formula** rather than undergoing a full cost review:

1. **Non-Disposal Costs:** Adjusted using 85% of the annual June-to-June percentage change in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for Garbage and Trash Collection (U.S. City Average).
2. **Landfill Disposal Costs:** Projected changes in landfill tipping fees are incorporated as a separate pass-through adjustment.

- *Note:* Total annual interim-year adjustments are legally capped between **1% and 6%**.

7. What are my rights as a property owner under Proposition 218?

In accordance with **Article XIII D of the California Constitution (Proposition 218)**, property owners in unincorporated El Dorado County have the right to submit a formal written protest against the proposed solid waste rate adjustments.

- **Public Hearing Details:**
  - **Date & Time:** Tuesday, December 1, 2026, at 10:00 a.m.
  - **Location:** County of El Dorado Board Chambers, 330 Fair Lane, Building A, Placerville, CA 95667
- **How to Submit a Written Protest:**
  - Only **one protest notice is allowed per parcel**.
  - Protests must be in writing, signed, and delivered (via mail or personal delivery) to the **Clerk of the Board** to be received **no later than the close of the public hearing on December 1, 2026**.
  - **Required Information:** Your full name and signature, the service address (parcel address), and a clear statement that you are protesting the proposed solid waste rate increases.
  - **Mail/Delivery Address:**

    Clerk of the Board

    330 Fair Lane, Building A

    Placerville, CA 95667

- If a majority of property owners submit valid, formal written protests by the close of the hearing, the proposed rate increases cannot be implemented.

Have questions?

For more information regarding these rate adjustments, you may email El Dorado County Environmental Management at **emd.info@edcgov.us**.