



DATE: July 31, 2026
TO: Lake County Special Districts Administration
FROM: LT Municipal Consultants
SUBJECT: Proposition 26 User Fee Study

DRAFT MEMORANDUM

Background

The Lake County Special Districts Administration oversees water and wastewater (sewer) collection and treatment services to County Service Areas and Districts within Lake County (County). The purpose of this memorandum is to establish a standardized schedule of administrative, water, and wastewater user fees. User fees are miscellaneous service fees that are subject to the provisions of Proposition 26 and are distinct from monthly or bimonthly utility rates which are subject to Proposition 218. The proposed fee schedule consists of fees for services that are cost-based. All fees proposed herein are exempt from the voting requirements of Proposition 26. A summary of the proposed fees is provided in Table 1. In addition, some County services will be billed on a time and materials basis. Table 2 provides the fully burdened hourly rates for County staff. Additional staff rates for on-call civil engineers and engineering consultants are provided as an attachment in Appendix A. Rates for contracted staff may be applicable in addition to County staff.

The fees shown in Table 1 and the staff rates in Table 2 are intended to recover the County's full cost of providing miscellaneous services. The County may implement fees less than or up to the amounts shown in compliance with the requirements of Proposition 26. Should the County charge less than the cost of service, a funding gap is created that is potentially recovered by other County revenue sources.

The County should periodically review and update the fees included in this memorandum. In between comprehensive cost reviews, the County should increase the fees annually by either the annual change in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) or by labor cost increases such as step increases, staff benefit increases, or cost of living increases.

Table 1: Summary of Proposed User Fees

Fee	Description	Proposed Fee
Backflow Device Inspection Fee	Charge per each inspection for inspection of backflow devices	\$74.33
Grease Trap Inspection Fee	Charge per each inspection for County staff to inspect and clean grease traps	\$70.98
Plan Checks*	Charge to review plans to make sure that they are consistent with code requirements	\$189.25
Inspection Fees	Charge to provide an inspection to ensure compliance with health and plumbing codes	\$94.63
Site Visit*	Charge to conduct a site visit	\$189.25
Sewer Permit Fee*	Charge to legally connect a property to the public sewer system, repair an existing sewer line, or alter plumbing fixtures	\$233.10
Letter of Violation Fee	Charge to review a code violation and provide a letter of violation	\$141.97
Main Line Extension Fee*	Charge for County staff time to review the extension of pipeline to a new property or development	\$997.54
CEQA Review Fee*	Charge for processing and evaluating environmental documents required by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)	\$1,008.46
* The proposed fee is a deposit based on the estimated time and materials required. Any additional time and/or materials required will be billed in addition to the deposit amount.		

Table 2: County Staffing Costs for FY2026/27

Staff Member	Fully Burdened Hourly Rate
Accountant I	\$54.84
Administrator	\$142.81
CMOM Coordinator II	\$67.60
Staff Service Analyst, Senior	\$74.00
Superintendent	\$90.12
US Compliance Coordinator	\$97.30
Utility Worker II	\$61.52
Utility Worker, Senior	\$70.72
Water CMOM Coordinator II	\$70.79
WWTPO I	\$66.29
WWTPO II	\$76.32

CMOM - Capacity Management Operations and Maintenance

WWTPO - Wastewater Treatment Plant Operator

On-call outside engineer and engineering consultant staff rates are provided in Appendix A

Requirements of Proposition 26

California voters enacted Proposition 26 in 2010 to define the term “tax” for purposes of Articles XIII A and XIII C of the California Constitution. Under Proposition 26, all levies, charges, and exactions “imposed” by local governments are considered taxes, unless they fit into one of the seven stated exceptions for local government:

- 1) A charge that is imposed for a special benefit or privilege provided to an individual, does not exceed the reasonable cost of service, and does not provide broad, general benefits to others in the community;
- 2) A charge imposed for a specific government service or product provided directly to the person paying the fee, that does not exceed the reasonable cost of providing service;
- 3) A charge imposed for reasonable regulatory costs (i.e. licenses, audits, inspections, permits) that does not exceed the reasonable cost of service;
- 4) A charge imposed for entrance to or use of local government property, or the purchase, rental, or lease of local government property;
- 5) Fines or penalties imposed for violations of the law;
- 6) A charge imposed as a condition of property development; and
- 7) Assessments and property-related fees imposed under the provisions of Proposition 218, such as water and sewer service charges.

The proposed fees are exempt from voter approval under one or more of these criteria. For fees that are required to be cost-based, the fees are imposed for the reasonable costs to the County for performing the services and do not exceed the reasonable costs to the County of providing these services. The fees were calculated based on the staff time and materials needed to perform each service. For fees that cannot exceed the reasonable cost of service, the County can charge up to the cost of providing service but also has the option of charging less than the cost of service at its discretion. For certain fees, a deposit is required. The deposit amount is based on the typical cost of providing the service. Any additional services beyond those included in the deposit will be billed on a time and materials basis.

Cost-Based Fee Methodology

The proposed fee schedule consists of cost-based fees. To calculate the cost of service for applicable fees, the County estimated the number of staff hours needed to complete each service, the fully burdened hourly rate for each staff member, and the cost of materials, vehicles, and supplies. Table 4 provides a list of County staff and hourly rates. The hourly rates represent the fully burdened rate of each staff member, including the cost of salary and benefits. Additional staff rates for on-call engineering services and engineering consultants are provided in Appendix A. These rates may be applicable in addition to the County staff rates displayed in Table 3.

Table 3: County Staffing Costs for FY2026/27

Staff Member	Fully Burdened Hourly Rate
Accountant I	\$54.84
Administrator	\$142.81
CMOM Coordinator II	\$67.60
Staff Service Analyst, Senior	\$74.00
Superintendent	\$90.12
US Compliance Coordinator	\$97.30
Utility Worker II	\$61.52
Utility Worker, Senior	\$70.72
Water CMOM Coordinator II	\$70.79
WWTPO I	\$66.29
WWTPO II	\$76.32

CMOM - Capacity Management Operations and Maintenance

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On-call outside engineer staff rates are provided in Appendix A

The proposed fees also include the County's cost of materials and vehicles needed to provide each service, if applicable. Hourly vehicle and large equipment costs were taken from the County's Cost Accounting Management System – Vehicle Categories Report (rates for January 30, 2026) or based on the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) hourly cost.

The total cost of each fee also includes an indirect cost rate of 5%, which is added to the cost of staff time, supplies, materials, and vehicles. The 5% adder covers estimated administrative overhead such as the cost to dispatch staff to provide services, customer and billing support, and management of staffing and supplies. The administrative adder should be updated if the County completes a cost allocation plan or indirect cost study.

Cost-Based Fee Calculations

This section provides the calculation of each cost-based user fee. The total cost of each fee (i.e., the cost per service) includes staff time, supplies, materials, vehicles, and an indirect cost rate of 5%. For some fees, no supplies, materials, or vehicles are needed to perform the service in which cases the proposed fee only includes staff time and the indirect cost rate. The calculations for each cost-based fee are provided below.

New customers must apply and complete the appropriate plan check applications depending on the type of construction. Each applicant must fill out contact information as well as provide information about the type of construction or type of business and submit floor plans and drawings. The County then conducts a plan check to review and approve each application. The plan check fee is calculated in Table

4 based on the staff time required to complete the plan check. If the plans require more than 2 hours for the initial review, additional fees will apply based on the time and materials (T&M) required.

Table 4: Plan Checks

Staff Position	Hours	Hourly Rate	Total Cost
Superintendent	2	\$90.12	<u>\$180.24</u>
Subtotal Staffing			\$180.24
Supplies, Materials, and Vehicles			\$0.00
Total Direct Costs (Staffing, Supplies, Materials, and Vehicles)			\$180.24
Indirect Cost Rate		5%	\$9.01
Deposit (additional T&M may apply)			\$189.25

After the plan check process has been completed and plans have been approved, an on-site inspection is required from the County. The proposed fee for conducting an inspection is calculated in Table 5 based on one hour of staff time.

Table 5: Inspection Fees

Staff Position	Hours	Hourly Rate	Total Cost
Superintendent	1	\$90.12	<u>\$90.12</u>
Subtotal Staffing			\$90.12
Supplies, Materials, and Vehicles			\$0.00
Total Direct Costs (Staffing, Supplies, Materials, and Vehicles)			\$90.12
Indirect Cost Rate		5%	\$4.51
Total Fee			\$94.63

The proposed fee for County staff to conduct a site visit is calculated in Table 6. The proposed fee is a deposit based on the estimated time and materials required. If the site visit requires more than 2 hours, additional fees will apply based on the time and materials required.

Table 6: Site Visit

Staff Position	Hours	Hourly Rate	Total Cost
Superintendent	2	\$90.12	<u>\$180.24</u>
Subtotal Staffing			\$180.24
Supplies, Materials, and Vehicles			\$0.00
Total Direct Costs (Staffing, Supplies, Materials, and Vehicles)			\$180.24
Indirect Cost Rate		5%	\$9.01
Deposit (additional T&M may apply)			\$189.25

Table 7 provides the fee to provide a letter of violation. This fee recovers the cost of the County's staff time to review a code violation and provide a letter of violation to the offender.

Table 7: Letter of Violation Fee

Staff Position	Hours	Hourly Rate	Total Cost
CMOM Coordinator II	2	\$67.60	<u>\$135.21</u>
Subtotal Staffing			\$135.21
Supplies, Materials, and Vehicles			\$0.00
Total Direct Costs (Staffing, Supplies, Materials, and Vehicles)			\$135.21
Indirect Cost Rate		5%	\$6.76
Total Fee			\$141.97

In accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), proposed developments are reviewed for potential environmental impacts and to determine what mitigation measures are necessary. Table 8 calculates the CEQA Review Fee. The proposed fee is a deposit based on the estimated time and materials required. If the CEQA Review requires more than 8 hours to complete, additional fees will apply based on the time and materials required.

Table 8: CEQA Review Fee

Staff Position	Hours	Hourly Rate	Total Cost
Administrator	4	\$142.81	\$571.26
US Compliance Coordinator	4	\$97.30	<u>\$389.18</u>
Subtotal Staffing			\$960.44
Supplies, Materials, and Vehicles			\$0.00
Total Direct Costs (Staffing, Supplies, Materials, and Vehicles)			\$960.44
Indirect Cost Rate		5%	\$48.02
Deposit (additional T&M may apply)			\$1,008.46

Water system customers at risk of potential cross-contamination are required to install backflow prevention devices which protect the drinking water system in cases where there is also an irrigation system or any other additional water source on the property. Wells, ponds, storage tanks, and lakefront residences with pumping systems are all required to have backflow devices. Backflow devices are mechanical check valves containing springs and rubber parts which need routine inspections and annual tests to ensure proper functionality. The County requires annual inspections by a certified technician to ensure each backflow device is working properly. It is proposed that the County implement a backflow device inspection fee which is calculated below in Table 9 based on the staff time to perform each inspection.

Table 9: Backflow Device Inspection Fee

Staff Position	Hours	Hourly Rate	Total Cost
Water CMOM Coordinator II	1	\$70.79	<u>\$70.79</u>
Subtotal Staffing			\$70.79
Supplies, Materials, and Vehicles			\$0.00
Total Direct Costs (Staffing, Supplies, Materials, and Vehicles)			\$70.79
Indirect Cost Rate		5%	\$3.54
Total Fee			\$74.33

Lake County Sanitation District's (LACOSAN) grease interceptor program began in 1976 with the passing of an Ordinance which requires the installation of grease interceptors in all food service and restaurant establishments. Additionally, the Ordinance established maintenance requirements designating that the owner of each establishment is responsible for expenses related to maintaining the device. Grease interceptors must be inspected regularly and cleaned on a regular basis to ensure efficient operation. LACOSAN suggests that they be cleaned no less than bimonthly, although the exact frequency of cleaning depends on the nature of the establishment, the volume of grease discharged, and the size and type of each grease interceptor.

LACOSAN requires that cleaning events for each grease interceptor be recorded in a maintenance log and kept on file. Maintenance of large-capacity grease interceptors must be performed by qualified grease haulers or rendering companies. Smaller under-counter grease interceptors (grease traps) can be cleaned in house by LACOSAN staff. The proposed fee for grease trap inspections performed in-house is \$70.98 based on the calculation in Table 10.

Table 10: Grease Trap Inspection Fee

Staff Position	Hours	Hourly Rate	Total Cost
CMOM Coordinator II	1	\$67.60	<u>\$67.60</u>
Subtotal Staffing			\$67.60
Supplies, Materials, and Vehicles			\$0.00
Total Direct Costs (Staffing, Supplies, Materials, and Vehicles)			\$67.60
Indirect Cost Rate		5%	\$3.38
Total Fee			\$70.98

Table 11 provides the sewer permit fee calculation. The permit fee recovers the cost of the County's staff time to review the proposed connection of a property to the public sewer system, repair to an existing sewer line, or alteration of plumbing fixtures. If the sewer permit review requires more than 3 hours, additional fees will apply based on the time and materials required.

Table 11: Sewer Permit Fee

Staff Position	Hours	Hourly Rate	Total Cost
Staff Service Analyst, Senior	3	\$74.00	<u>\$222.00</u>
Subtotal Staffing			\$222.00
Supplies, Materials, and Vehicles			\$0.00
Total Direct Costs (Staffing, Supplies, Materials, and Vehicles)			\$222.00
Indirect Cost Rate		5%	\$11.10
Deposit (additional T&M may apply)			\$233.10

If new development projects require a main line extension in order to connect to the sewer system, a main line extension fee will apply. The main line extension fee is calculated below. The proposed fee is a deposit based on the estimated time and materials required. Any additional time and/or materials required, beyond those included below, will be billed in addition to the deposit amount.

Table 12: Main Line Extension Fee

Staff Position	Hours	Hourly Rate	Total Cost
Superintendent	2	\$90.12	\$180.24
Staff Service Analyst, Senior	2	\$74.00	\$148.00
Administrator	2	\$142.81	\$285.63
US Compliance Coordinator	2	\$97.30	\$194.59
Water CMOM Coordinator	2	\$70.79	<u>\$141.58</u>
Subtotal Staffing			\$950.04
Supplies, Materials, and Vehicles			\$0.00
Total Direct Costs (Staffing, Supplies, Materials, and Vehicles)			\$950.04
Indirect Cost Rate		5%	\$47.50
Deposit (additional T&M may apply)			\$997.54

Appendix A: Staff Rates for Engineering Professional Services

Company [1] [2]	Position Title	Hourly Rate
Brelje & Race Consulting Engineers	Associate (Managing Engineer)	\$230-\$260
Brelje & Race Consulting Engineers	Associate Principal	\$245-\$270
Brelje & Race Consulting Engineers	CAD Designer	\$160-\$180
Brelje & Race Consulting Engineers	CAD Technician	\$150-\$170
Brelje & Race Consulting Engineers	CAD Technician Supervisor	\$175-\$200
Brelje & Race Consulting Engineers	Construction Engineer	\$185-\$210
Brelje & Race Consulting Engineers	Construction Technician I	\$140-\$160
Brelje & Race Consulting Engineers	Construction Technician II	\$160-\$180
Brelje & Race Consulting Engineers	Engineer I	\$195-\$220
Brelje & Race Consulting Engineers	Engineer II	\$205-\$230
Brelje & Race Consulting Engineers	Engineering Intern	\$130-\$145
Brelje & Race Consulting Engineers	Engineering Technician I	\$170-\$190
Brelje & Race Consulting Engineers	Engineering Technician II	\$180-\$205
Brelje & Race Consulting Engineers	Planner	\$165-\$185
Brelje & Race Consulting Engineers	Senior Engineer	\$220-\$250
Brelje & Race Consulting Engineers	Senior Planner	\$190-\$215
Brelje & Race Consulting Engineers	Senior Principal	\$265-\$295
Brelje & Race Consulting Engineers	Senior Project Advisor	\$225-\$255
Brelje & Race Consulting Engineers	Senior Surveyor	\$200-\$225
Brelje & Race Consulting Engineers	Survey Technician	\$170-\$190
Brelje & Race Consulting Engineers	Surveyor	\$180-\$205
Brelje & Race Consulting Engineers	Technical Writer	\$130-\$145
Helix Environmental Planning	Archaeology Field Director (Helix)	\$135
Helix Environmental Planning	Assistant Biologist (Helix)	\$110
Helix Environmental Planning	Assistant Construction Project Manager (Helix)	\$130
Helix Environmental Planning	Assistant Project Manager (Helix)	\$160
Helix Environmental Planning	Assistant Restoration Supervisor (Helix)	\$110
Helix Environmental Planning	Asst. Archaeology Field Director (Helix)	\$125
Helix Environmental Planning	Biologist (Helix)	\$185
Helix Environmental Planning	Clerical (Helix)	\$75
Helix Environmental Planning	Construction Foreman (Helix)	\$115
Helix Environmental Planning	Construction Project Manager 1-111 (Helix)	\$230
Helix Environmental Planning	Director of Operations (Helix)	\$250
Helix Environmental Planning	Environmental Compliance Specialist (Helix)	\$200
Helix Environmental Planning	Environmental Planner (Helix)	\$150
Helix Environmental Planning	Equipment Manager (Helix)	\$104
Helix Environmental Planning	GIS Specialist/Graphics Specialist (Helix)	\$185
Helix Environmental Planning	Irrigation Technician (Helix)	\$140
Helix Environmental Planning	Land Manager (Helix)	\$106
Helix Environmental Planning	Landscape Architect (Helix)	\$190
Helix Environmental Planning	Landscape Designer (Helix)	\$130
Helix Environmental Planning	Noise/Air Quality Specialist (Helix)	\$150
Helix Environmental Planning	Nursery Manager (Helix)	\$150
Helix Environmental Planning	Nursery Technician (Helix)	\$55
Helix Environmental Planning	Operations Manager (Helix)	\$150
Helix Environmental Planning	Operator (Helix)	\$158
Helix Environmental Planning	Paleontology Technician (Helix)	\$125
Helix Environmental Planning	Principal (Helix)	\$330
Helix Environmental Planning	Principal Biologist/Regulatory Specialist (Helix)	\$330

Company [1] [2]	Position Title	Hourly Rate
Helix Environmental Planning	Principal Cultural Resources Specialist (Helix)	\$235
Helix Environmental Planning	Principal Landscape Architect (Helix)	\$240
Helix Environmental Planning	Principal Noise/Air Quality Specialist (Helix)	\$265
Helix Environmental Planning	Principal Paleontologist (Helix)	\$230
Helix Environmental Planning	Principal Planner (Helix)	\$330
Helix Environmental Planning	Project Manager (Helix)	\$205
Helix Environmental Planning	Regulatory Specialist (Helix)	\$150
Helix Environmental Planning	Restoration Foreman (Helix)	\$104
Helix Environmental Planning	Restoration Lead (Helix)	\$93
Helix Environmental Planning	Restoration Supervisor 1-1 (Helix)	\$153
Helix Environmental Planning	Restoration Technician 1-111 (Helix)	\$93
Helix Environmental Planning	Safety Manager (Helix)	\$225
Helix Environmental Planning	Senior Archaeologist/Architectural Historian (Helix)	\$175
Helix Environmental Planning	Senior Archaeology Field Director (Helix)	\$150
Helix Environmental Planning	Senior Construction Project Manager (Helix)	\$330
Helix Environmental Planning	Senior Environmental Planner (Helix)	\$170
Helix Environmental Planning	Senior Field Director (Helix)	\$150
Helix Environmental Planning	Senior GIS Specialist (Helix)	\$200
Helix Environmental Planning	Senior Noise/Air Quality Specialist (Helix)	\$220
Helix Environmental Planning	Senior Project Manager (Helix)	\$290
Helix Environmental Planning	Senior Restoration Supervisor (Helix)	\$155
Helix Environmental Planning	Senior Scientist/Regulatory Specialist (Helix)	\$230
Helix Environmental Planning	Staff Archaeologist/Architectural Historian (Helix)	\$135
Helix Environmental Planning	Staff Paleontologist (Helix)	\$135
Helix Environmental Planning	Technical Editor (Helix)	\$140
Larry Walker Associates	Administrative (lwa)	\$85
Larry Walker Associates	AR/AP Manager (lwa)	\$159
Larry Walker Associates	Associate I (lwa)	\$313
Larry Walker Associates	Associate II (lwa)	\$334
Larry Walker Associates	Contract Administrator (lwa)	\$159
Larry Walker Associates	Executive Vice President (lwa)	\$368
Larry Walker Associates	Graphic Designer (lwa)	\$146
Larry Walker Associates	President (lwa)	\$379
Larry Walker Associates	Project Level I-A (lwa)	\$208
Larry Walker Associates	Project Level I-B (lwa)	\$181
Larry Walker Associates	Project Level I-C (lwa)	\$155
Larry Walker Associates	Project Level II-A (lwa)	\$256
Larry Walker Associates	Project Level II-B (lwa)	\$228
Larry Walker Associates	Senior Executive (lwa)	\$379
Larry Walker Associates	Senior I (lwa)	\$277
Larry Walker Associates	Senior II (lwa)	\$298
Larry Walker Associates	Vice President (lwa)	\$352
RSA+	Administrative coordinator (RSA + SD)	\$100
RSA+	Assistant Engineer (RSA + SD)	\$190
RSA+	Associate Principal (RSA + SD)	\$290
RSA+	Design Engineer (RSA + SD)	\$200
RSA+	Draftsperson (RSA + SD)	\$140
RSA+	Engineering Aide (RSA + SD)	\$125
RSA+	Engineering Technician (RSA + SD)	\$180
RSA+	Lead Engineer (RSA + SD)	\$240

Company [1] [2]	Position Title	Hourly Rate
RSA+	Licensed Land Surveyor (RSA + SD)	\$250
RSA+	Prevailing Wage Additional Field Personnel (RSA + SD)	\$170
RSA+	Prevailing Wage QSP Stormwater Sampling Technician (RSA + SD)	\$190
RSA+	Prevailing Wage Survey Crew (2 Man) (RSA + SD)	\$395
RSA+	Principal (RSA + SD)	\$325
RSA+	Project Engineer (RSA + SD)	\$220
RSA+	Project Manager (RSA + SD)	\$255
RSA+	Survey Technician (RSA + SD)	\$180
Wunderlich-Malec	Assistant Office Surveyor (JDE)	\$173
Wunderlich-Malec	Civil CAD Technician (JDE)	\$161
Wunderlich-Malec	Civil Construction Manager (JDE)	\$207
Wunderlich-Malec	Civil Design Engineer (JDE)	\$173
Wunderlich-Malec	Civil Engineer (JDE)	\$230
Wunderlich-Malec	Construction Manager (WME)	\$150
Wunderlich-Malec	Mechanical Project Engineer (WME)	\$160
Wunderlich-Malec	Office Surveyor (JDE)	\$230
Wunderlich-Malec	One Person Survey Crew (JDE)	\$242
Wunderlich-Malec	Principal Mechanical Engineer (WME)	\$200
Wunderlich-Malec	Two Person Survey Crew (JDE)	\$268

1 – Overtime rates may be applicable for Helix Environmental Planning and RSA+ at 1.5 times the rates displayed.

2 – Overtime rates may be applicable for Wunderlich-Malec may apply. Overtime hours (over 40 hours per week) are billed at 1.5 times the rate displayed while premium time (Sundays & Holidays) are billed at 2 times the rate displayed.