



# Ratepayer Input



Office of the Controller  
Office of Refuse Rates Administration

June 25, 2025

# Rate-Setting Outreach and Ratepayer Input

## Distribution Channels

### Public Website



[sf.gov/refuserates](https://sf.gov/refuserates) explains the rate-setting process, links to the FAQ, and lists all past and upcoming public meetings.

### Email Campaigns



Call for public input, FAQ, and list of public meetings sent to 1,700+ recipients, including City departments, Board of Supervisors, local press, and subscribers of Controller’s Office updates.

### Social Media



Link to FAQ and public meetings posted on X to remind public of upcoming opportunities for comment. Related City agencies and local press are asked to help share.

### Public Records Automation



Alert created in NextRequest (departmental records request software) that directs users to the Refuse Rates Administration website if select keywords are part of their request. We have 1,670+ instances of users being directed to the Refuse Rates website.

### Neighborhood Papers



Targeted outreach to local news outlets, specifically neighborhood papers.

### Neighborhood Groups & Districts



Targeted outreach to registered neighborhood organizations in San Francisco.

## Ratepayer Input

### Public Hearings



Ratepayers will have opportunities for public comment at Rate Board Hearings, Commission on Environment hearings, Street and Sanitation Hearings, and Refuse Rates Administrator’s Hearings.

### Prop F Written Objections



Ratepayers can submit written objections electronically through an online form accessed through our website at [sf.gov/refuserates](https://sf.gov/refuserates) or by mail.

### Prop 218 Protests



Ratepayers can submit a protest against proposed rate changes in response to our Prop 218 mailer anticipated to go out to ratepayers at the end of April.

### Community Meetings



Recology has agreed to present their proposed rate application at two community meetings where the Refuse Rates Administrator will document responses.

### Focus Groups



Refuse Rates Administrator is conducting 5 focus groups broken down by ratepayer type and language to solicit input on potential investments.

# Commission Hearing Comment Summary

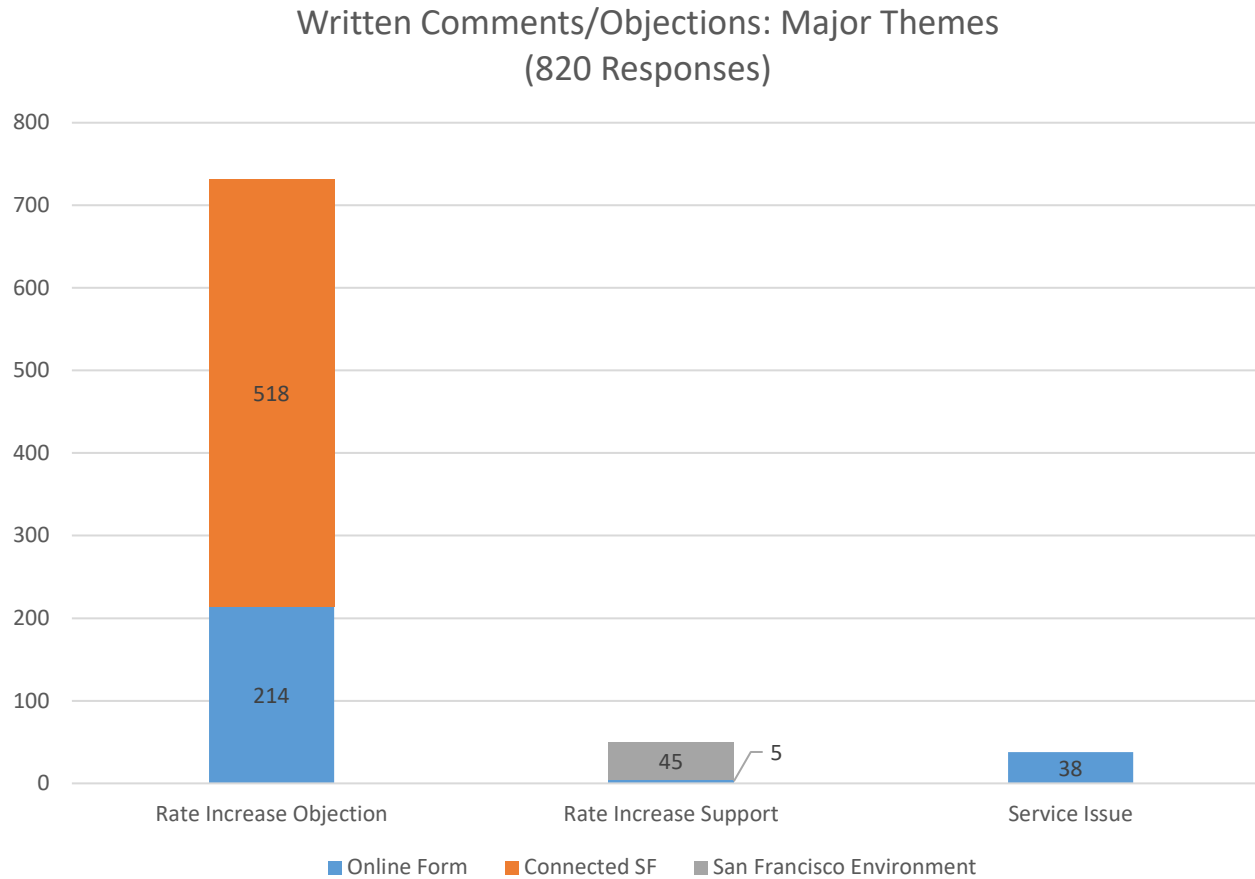
- **Commission on Environment Hearing 2/4/25:**
  - Supported contingent schedule that could allow Recology to further raise rates to build a trash processing facility
  - Could not support proposal because it did not make enough progress towards the City's Zero Waste goals.
  - Public Comment: SF Climate Emergency Coalition, SF Bay Physicians for Social Responsibility, expressed support for rate increase and Environment's Zero Waste Programs
- **Sanitation and Streets Commission Hearing 4/24/25:**
  - Concerned about the size of the rate increase. Expressed opposition to a contingent schedule for a trash processing facility.
- **Commission on Environment Hearing 4/28/25:**
  - Expressed concern about the reductions to Environment's Impound Account proposal.
  - Passed resolution stating that the Commission does not support the proposal.
  - Public Comment: Letter supporting Environment's Impound request.

# Refuse Rate Board Public Comment Summary

- **Refuse Rate Board Hearing 5/30/25**

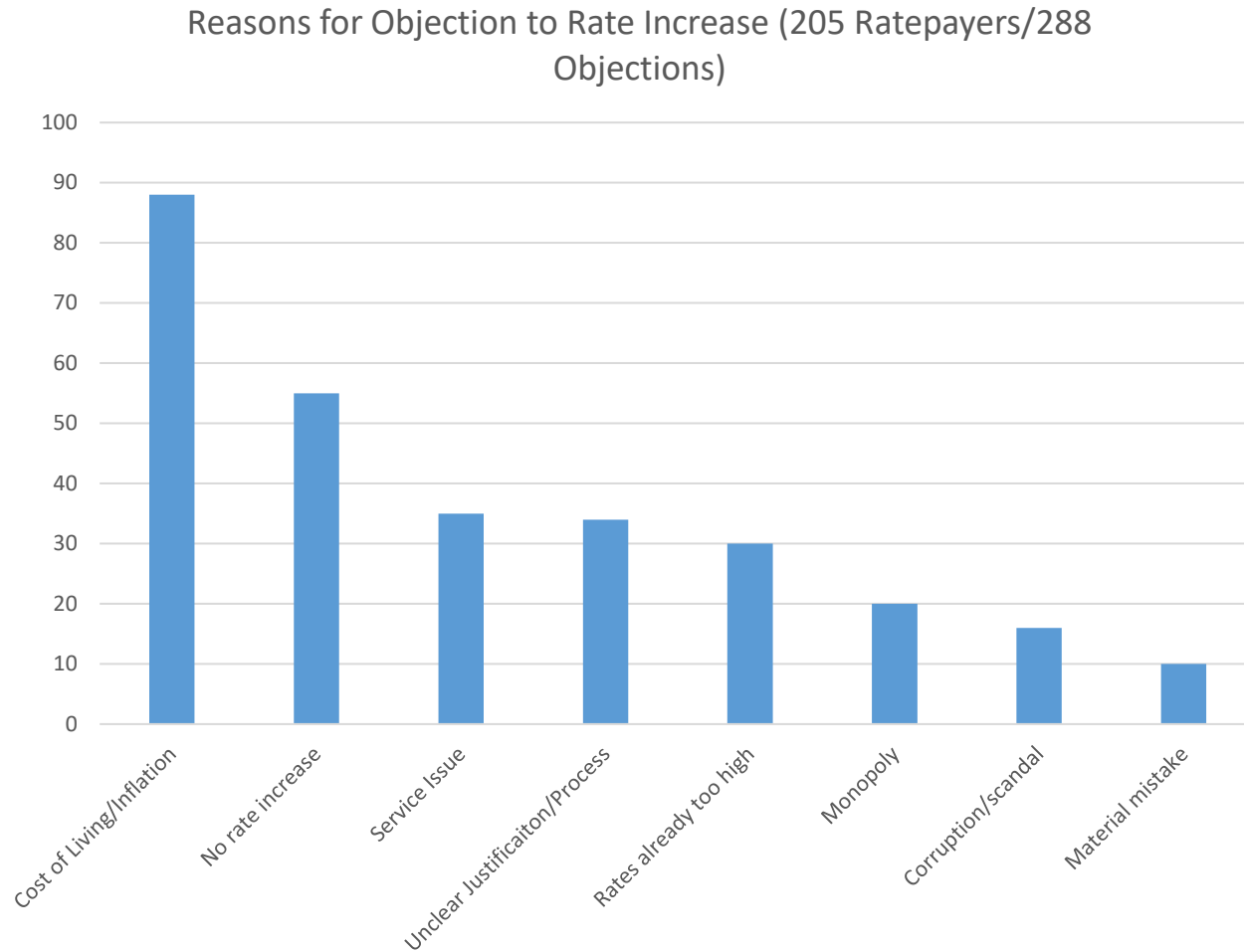
- One public commenter expressed support for San Francisco Environment's Zero Waste programs, particularly around reuse, e-waste, and repair, as well as the multilingual outreach opportunities provided through their repair events.
- One commenter objected to the rate increase, citing population loss, job loss, wage deflation, cost of living increases, monopoly, and bribery scandal. Took issue with the Environment Department's \$15 million budget request.
- One commenter from Connected SF shared concern about the increase and lack of transparency around bidding process for major investments such as trash processing, ZEVs, and expenditures related to the impound account. Advocated for better public oversight, public procurement processes, and disclosure of uses.
- Another commenter expressed support for the statements made by the commenter from Connected SF.

# Prop F Written Objection: Summary



- Proposition F allows any person, firm, or corporation affected by the rates file a written objection to the Refuse Rates Administrator.
- The RRA takes written objections or comments mainly through an online form.
- 820 objections/comments have been received.
- 732 objected to the rate increase for various reasons. 518 of which were from a form letter drafted by Connected SF. 1 is an objection coming from a coalition tied to Affordable Housing Alliance, SF Anti-Displacement Coalition, SF Apartment Association, SF Tenants Union
- 51 increased some form of rate increase. 45 of which were from a form letter drafted in support of the Environment Department request.
- 38 were comments related to service issues.

# Prop F Written Objection: Rate Increase Objections



- The most common reason for objecting to a rate increase is that the proposed rate increases are outpacing the cost of living. These objections make up 30.6% of all rate increase objections.
- 19.1% of objections gave no reason.
- 12.2% of objections cited service issues they've experienced.
- Another 11.8% of objections cited that there is not enough justification for the rate increase.
- 10.4% cited that the current rates are already too high.
- Other reasons include that Recology is a monopoly, references to the corruption scandal, and references to the material mistake disclosed in the September Rate Board Hearing.

# Prop F Written Objection: Notable Findings

- Service Issues:
  - 19 comments related to service issues cited that the minimum level of service was too high.
  - 7 comments related to service issues cited experiencing missed pickups.
  - Other service issues include noise complaints, need for additional pickup, and that battery disposal is not being collected properly.
- Rate-Setting Issues
  - 5 commenters noted that Prop M (business tax) should not be a factor in the rate increase.
  - Several commenters suggested raising commercial rates instead of residential rates.
  - Other commenters cited that City government should control its own spending before increasing rates, that the government should subsidize the cost, or that certain programs such as illegal dumping should be handled and funded through the City rather than Recology.

# Constituent Letters

## **Connected SF (518 letters)**

- Opposition to rate increase due to impact to renters, small businesses, and working families.
- Opposes investments in:
  - electric trucks
  - new trash processing facility
  - contamination removal equipment.
- Cites no bidding or public review process to validate costs and limited outreach process.

## **Environment Letter (45 letters)**

- Supports request to increase Environment Department by \$3 million.



# Constituent Letters

## **Affordable Housing Alliance/SF Anti-Displacement Coalition/SF Apartment Association/ SF Tenants Union**

- Growth Rates Assumptions vs Plan Bay Area 2050
- Advanced Clean Fleets and Capital Reserve Fund
- Intercompany Organics Tip Fee Escalation
- Corporate Allocations
- Profit vs Operating Expense Transparency
- Escalation of Legal Fees

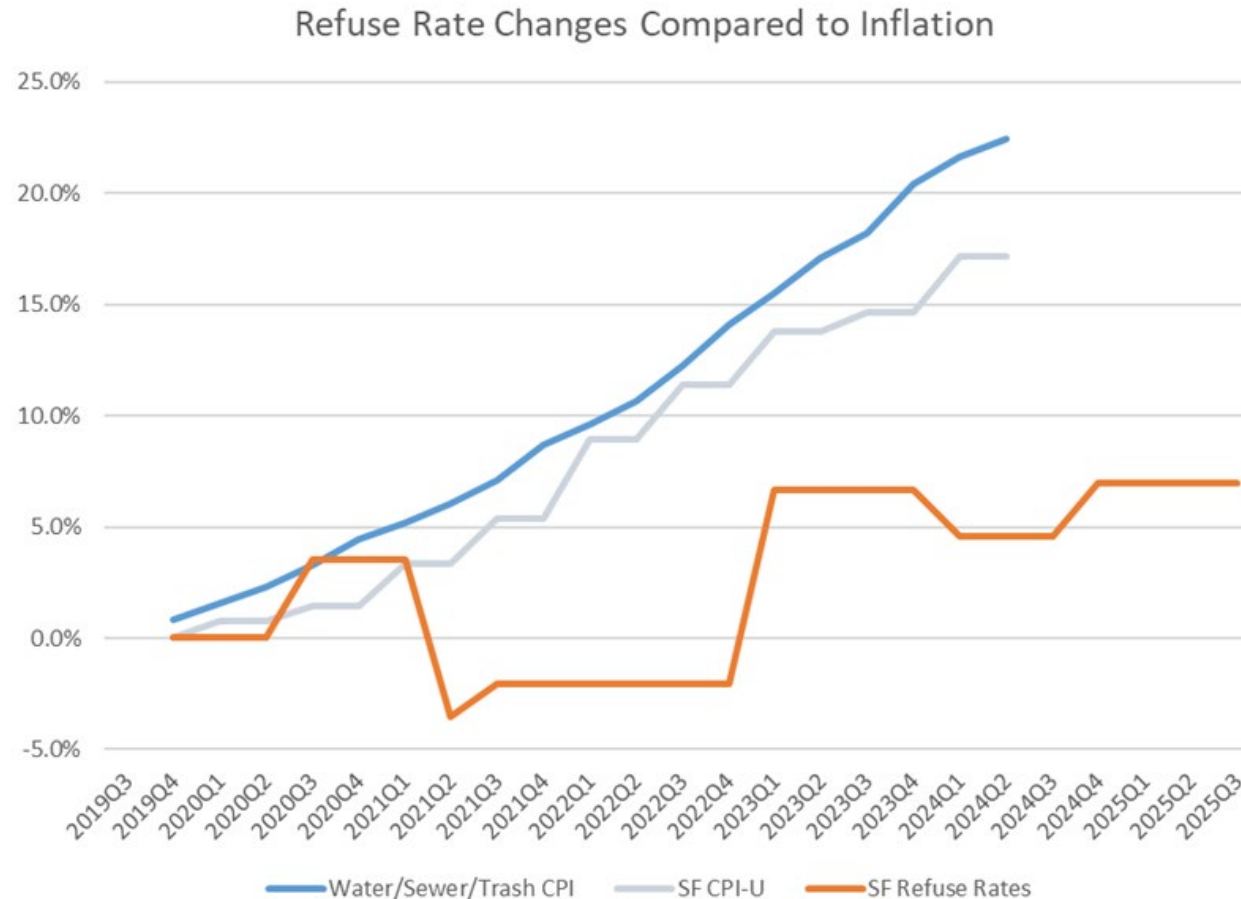
## Proposition 218: In-Person Protest and Public Comment

- This item constitutes the hearing to consider Proposition 218 protests to the rate changes proposed by Recology and the separate set of changes that have been proposed by the Refuse Rates Administrator.
- The City was required to mail a written notice to property owners of any proposed changes. On April 21, 2025, the City mailed the required written notice to all San Francisco Residential Property owners as identified and recorded in the Assessor's Secured Property Tax Roll.
- The City must hold a public hearing at least 45-days after mailing of the notice. Today's hearing is being held 65 days after the notice was sent.
- At the hearing the City must consider all protests against the rates. Protests submitted before the hearing and at the hearing before close of public comment on item 3 will be counted, and the count will be reported after the close of public comment on item 3.
- If more than half the property owners submit written protests by the close of this item, the City shall not approve the rates. The Secured Property Tax Rolls were used to identify 198,663 residential property owners. 50% would constitute 99,332 property owners.

# Proposition 218 Tally

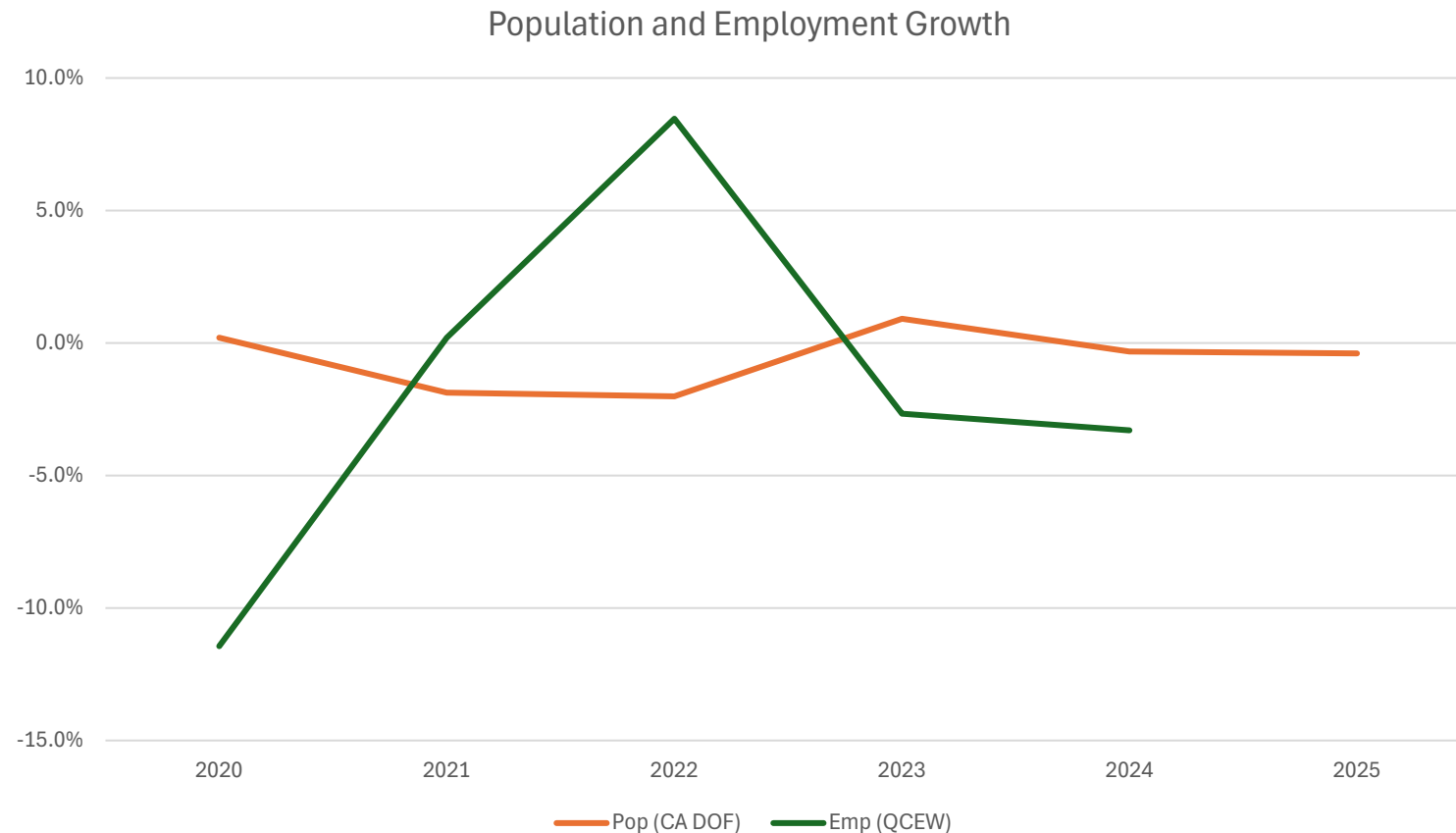
Protests	Count	% of Residential Property Owners
In-Person Written Protests	252	0.13%
Mail-In Protests	974	0.49%
Electronic Protests	36	0.02%
<b>Total Protests</b>	<b>1,262</b>	<b>0.64%</b>
Return-to-Sender	4,298	2.16%
<b>Total w/Return-to-Sender</b>	<b>5,560</b>	<b>2.80%</b>
with Prop F Objections	732	0.37%
<b>Total w/RtS and Prop F Objections</b>	<b>6,292</b>	<b>3.17%</b>

# Appendix: Cost Increases



- Bay Area Costs (SF CPI-U) has grown by 17.2% since 2019.
- National Water/Sewer/Trash costs have grown by 22.4% over the same period.
- By comparison, San Francisco's refuse rates have grown by 7.0%, lagging behind Bay Area inflation by 10.2% and by the Water/Sewer/Trash costs by 15.4%

# Appendix: Growth Rates



- Proposal Assumptions:
  - Residential: No Growth
  - Commercial:
    - 2026: 0.75%
    - 2027: 1.50%
    - 2028: 2.00%
  - Combined:
    - 2026: 0.36%
    - 2027: 0.72%
    - 2028: 0.97%
- ABAG PBA 2050 Jobs: Annual Average 1.00%
- ABAG PBA 2050 Population: Annual Average 1.66%

# Appendix: I/C Organics Rates

Organics Type	RY2026	RY2027	RY2028	Market Avg	Market Median
<b>Commercial and Food</b>					
Processed	\$77.74	\$80.29	\$82.76		
Unprocessed	\$120.38	\$123.92	\$127.70		
<i>Commercial and Food Average</i>	<i>\$104.49</i>	<i>\$107.65</i>	<i>\$110.90</i>	<i>\$116.67</i>	<i>\$ 119.00</i>
<b>Brush (Residential)</b>	\$91.27	\$93.98	\$92.26	\$96.72	\$ 82.12

- Proposal moves organics rates into 3 tiers:
  - Processed Organics
  - Unprocessed Organics
  - Brush
- Organics from Organics Depackager will fall under processed organics rate.
- Market average and median based on survey of 16 jurisdictions in California.