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Rio Dell, CA 95562  
(707) 764-3532  
cityofriodell.ca.gov*



February 3, 2026

TO: Rio Dell City Council

FROM: Kyle Knopp, City Manager

SUBJECT: Approve Resolution No. 1662-2026 Updating the Wastewater Strength Classification System

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE CITY COUNCIL:

Approve Resolution No. 1662-2026 updating the wastewater strength classification system; or,

Take no action.

BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION

Staff recommends approval of Resolution No. 1662-2026 to update the City's wastewater strength classification system by reclassifying certain coffee shop facilities from "Medium Strength" to "Domestic Strength" and clarifying the nomenclature for this category.

In May 2014, the City adopted a wastewater rate structure based on a study conducted by Bartle Wells Associates (BWA). This system established sewer strength classifications based on BWA's rate study experience, industry standard practices, and the State Water Resources Control Board's Revenue Program Guidelines. The classification system has been in continuous use since adoption.

The current classification under review applies to coffee shop facilities that meet the following criteria:

- No dishwasher on premises
- No garbage disposal on premises
- No food preparation on site
- No grease trap installed

Recent Classification History:

- Pre-July 2024: Classified as Domestic Strength
- July 2024: Staff review resulted in reclassification to High Strength (incorrect)
- November 2024: Corrected to Medium Strength per Resolution 1536-2022; customer received credit for July-November 2024 overcharges
- December 2024-Present: Currently classified as Medium Strength

Staff recently consulted with Alison Lechowicz of LT Municipal Consultants, the City's current rate consultant and former BWA employee. Based on updated professional guidance, coffee shops meeting the criteria listed above should be classified as Domestic Strength rather than Medium Strength.

Resolution No. 1662-2026 will:

1. Update the wastewater strength classification system to reclassify qualifying coffee shops to "Domestic Strength"
2. Clarify the nomenclature to specify that "Coffee Shops – W/O Dish Washer & Garbage Disposal" includes facilities with no food preparation
3. Authorize a refunding of the difference in classifications to July 1, 2025. This is recommended as the consultants guidance is new and the prior fiscal year FY 24-25 is closed and audited.

The reclassification will result in reduced wastewater fees for affected facilities, reflecting the lower strength category. The impact is limited to the specific subset of coffee shop operations meeting the qualifying criteria. This impact is not expected to be significant.

The City is scheduled to conduct its next 5-year wastewater rate study within the next 18 months. During this process, staff will direct the consultant to:

- Comprehensively review the classification system
- Provide recommendations for meeting current industry standards
- Enhance clarity for staff implementation

**Attachments:**

Resolution No. 1662-2026  
'Track Changes' sheet for Exhibit A

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**RESOLUTION NO. 1662-2026**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF RIO DELL AMENDING EXHIBIT A OF  
RESOLUTION NO. 1536-2022 RELATED TO FEES AND CHARGES FOR WASTEWATER  
CUSTOMERS PURSUANT TO CHAPTER 13.10 OF THE RIO DELL MUNICIPAL CODE**

**WHEREAS**, the City of Rio Dell is authorized by the California Constitution and the California Government Code to charge fees to cover expenses for the services it provides; and,

**WHEREAS**, the City Council of the City of Rio Dell did adopt Ordinance No. 207, codified in Chapter 13.10 of the Rio Dell Municipal Code, that allows for sewer rates and charges to be modified by resolution of the City Council to provide for future changes; and,

**WHEREAS**, Ordinance No. 207 deemed reasonable and authorizes the Council for the City of Rio Dell to fix charges to pay for expenses to be incurred by the wastewater department. The expenses to be paid include: (a) salaries, office expenses and other necessary disbursements; (b) the operation expenses of the utility; (c) provisions for the appropriate funds for repairs, replacements or betterments "; and,

**WHEREAS**, all wastewater system connections, once purchased, place a demand on the capacity of the treatment and collection system for processing and treat possible effluent whether in service or not; and ,

**WHEREAS**, the Rio Dell City Council, by means of written resolution, is authorized to fix and determine rates and charges for wastewater service provided by the City to all of its users; and,

**WHEREAS**, new guidance from the City's wastewater consultant has determined that a minor correction to Exhibit A is needed.

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** by the City Council of the City of Rio Dell that this Resolution rescinds Exhibit A of Resolution 1536-2022 and replaces said Exhibit with the Exhibit A of this Resolution No. 1662-2026. All other components of Resolution No. 1536-2022 shall remain in full force and effect.

**Further**, The City Manager is authorized to refund the difference in cost related to the change in strength classification for the impacted customers to July 1, 2025.

**PASSED AND ADOPTED** at a regularly scheduled council meeting of the City of Rio Dell held on February 23, 2026 by the following vote:

Ayes:

Noes:

Abstain:

Absent:

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Debra Garnes, Mayor

ATTEST:

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Karen Dunham, City Clerk

**Exhibit A**

**Strength Classifications into Low, Domestic, Medium, and High Strength Dischargers**

Low Strength	Banks & Financial Institutions
	Barber Shops
	Hair Salon (hair cutting only)
	Dry Cleaners
	Laundromats
	Offices - Business and Professional
	Offices - Medical/Dental (without surgery)
	Post Offices
	Retail Stores
	Schools without cafeteria
	Car Wash
Domestic Strength	Residential - All
	Appliance Repair
	Auto Dealers - without Service Facilities
	Nail Salons
	Pet Groomers
	Bars & Taverns - without dining
	Camp Ground or RV Park
	Churches, Halls & Lodges
	Fire Stations
	Hotels, Motels, B&Bs, and Vacation Rentals (W/O restaurant)
	Libraries
	Rest Homes
	Shoe Repair Shops
	Theaters
	Warehouses
	Car Washes - Self Service
	High Tech Medical Manufacturing
	Light Manufacturing/Industrial
	Mobile Home Park
	Gas Station
	Gym or Health Club
	Schools with cafeteria
Medium Strength	Auto Dealers - with Service Facilities
	Machine Shops
	Service Stations, Garages, Auto Repair Shops
	Coffee Shops – W/O Dish Washer, Garbage Disposal, Grease Trap & Food Preparation
	Restaurants - W/O Dish Washer & Garbage Disposal
	Mini Marts - W/O Dish Washer & Garbage Disposal
	Mini Mart with Gas Pumps - W/O Dish Washer & Garbage Disposal
	Catering - W/O Dish Washer & Garbage Disposal
	Hotel/Motel with Restaurant
	Beauty Shops ( hair cutting w/additional treatments)
High Strength	Hospitals - General, Convalescent & Veterinarian
	Medical Offices - with Surgery
	Dental Offices
	Restaurants - with Dish Washer or Garbage Disposal
	Coffee Shops - with Dish Washer or Garbage Disposal

Catering - with Dish Washer or Garbage Disposal  
Bakeries  
Butcher Shops  
Fish Market/Shop  
Markets - with Dish Washer or Garbage Disposal  
Markets - with Bakeries or Butcher Shops  
Mini Marts - with Dish Washer or Garbage Disposal  
Wineries  
Cheese Makers  
Dairy Products (milk producers, yogurt, ice cream maker)  
Specialty Foods Manufacturing (e.g., olive oil maker)  
Ice Cream Shop  
Tasting Rooms  
Spa with Various Beauty Treatments  
Funeral Homes/ Mortuary



ATTEST:

Karen Dunham, City Clerk

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	Schools without cafeteria
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	Auto Dealers - without Service Facilities
	Nail Salons
	Pet Groomers
	Bars & Taverns - without dining
	Camp Ground or RV Park
	Churches, Halls & Lodges
	Fire Stations
	Hotels, Motels, B&Bs, and Vacation Rentals (W/O restaurant)
	Libraries
	Rest Homes
	Shoe Repair Shops
	Theaters
	Warehouses
	Car Washes - Self Service
	High Tech Medical Manufacturing
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Specialty Foods Manufacturing (e.g., olive oil maker)  
Ice Cream Shop  
Tasting Rooms  
Spa with Various Beauty Treatments  
Funeral Homes/ Mortuary