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City of Duluth Communications Office

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SUBJECT: City apologizes for implementing storm water rate increase six months early

BY: Kate Van Daele, Public Information Officer

City apologizes for implementing storm water rate increase six months early

[Duluth, MN] The City of Duluth issued an apology for charging Duluth residents for an increase in stormwater rates six months early. The rate increase had been approved by the Public Utilities Commission and City Council in the summer of 2020. The original proposal was for the increase to begin on January 1, 2021. The Public Utilities Commission proposed that the rate starts on July 1 so that those dealing with financial hardship caused by COVID-19 would have time to prepare and budget for the increase.

“The City apologizes for this oversight,” Chief Administrative Officer Noah Schuchman said. “Mistakes happen, and we are committed to fixing the error. Instead of the rate beginning in July, we requested that the Public Utilities Commission bump the start date to August to make up for the overcharge in January.”

Homeowners currently pay \$6.75 a month. The rate would increase to \$7.51 this year. The increase in cost will raise funds that would be used for capital projects to prevent further deterioration of the stormwater system while maintaining its viability to serve the needs of those who use the system's users.

There are over 411 miles of pipe, 10,000 catch basins, 5,000 manholes, and 2,500 culverts that make up Duluth's stormwater system.

The City last voted to increase stormwater rates in 2016.

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