



San Francisco, California

San Francisco's Hetch Hetchy water system transports 85 percent of the area's supply from a reservoir of Sierra Nevada snowmelt in Yosemite National Park more than 160 miles into the Bay Area. It then connects with more than 1,200 miles of water mains — many approaching 100 years old — to deliver water to the area's 2.4 million residents. The system also crosses five active earthquake faults. Studies determined that a 7.0 magnitude earthquake would result in a public health and economic disaster by leaving the City without a water supply.

The city was facing a major capital improvement project, and its residents, had to decide how much they valued the service. In 2002, voters approved a \$4.3 billion bond measure to rebuild the water system, paid through a rate increases that will more than triple their current monthly water bills over 10 years.

To gain support for increases, the City launched a citywide education and



outreach effort in 2005. With the support of local leaders, the San Francisco Board of Supervisors unanimously adopted the increases with little opposition.

The city is also pursuing sustainable solutions for upgrading the wastewater system, including reducing chemical dependency during treatment, using green technology and environmentally friendly alternatives, full-cost pricing, and anticipating Bay area regulation changes. The utility began an educational program in 2006 to start people thinking about the importance of wastewater, and how much they rely on the wastewater system.