

Rahni Jensen

From: Sreeparna <nishaadh@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, November 10, 2025 6:37 AM
To: Rahni Jensen
Cc: Kathy Ballinger
Subject: Re: Requesting Leak Adjustment Credit for 015473-000

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Hi Rahni and Kathy,

Thank you so much for explaining the background at such length! We submitted an appeal to the Board by email (see another email I just sent you). From Kathy's earlier email, I trust that such an appeal (by email) is adequate for the Board to consider reviewing it. Can you please confirm?

Thanks!
Sreeparna

On Fri, Oct 31, 2025 at 9:00 AM Rahni Jensen <RJensen@svwd.org> wrote:

Hello Sreeparna,

Kathy forwarded me your email so I could help clarify and answer your question. While the Admin Code does state that the District can make these adjustments, it is at the Board's discretion, because we no longer have a Leak Adjustment Program.

When the District had a program specifically to administrate these adjustments it was a formal program, with a uniform process - there was a form, a specific way to calculate the adjustment amount, etc. This was in large part due to the way the District was able to collect water flow information on accounts, and the billing cycle. The District used to collect meter reads once every 2 months – with no other means to monitor water flow. This meant leaks could go unnoticed for several months before drawing attention, unless they became visible. Unless the meter was being physically observed, there was no way to find those smaller leaks either – a dripping faucet, a running toilet, a crack in the pool causing consistent filling, a hairline crack in a service line, etc. Those smaller leaks were slipping under the radar for both the District, and the customer, so it was really only until there was a large volume, or visible leak, that customers were aware they were unintentionally losing water somewhere on their property.

As advancements in water monitoring technology became available, and the District was able to utilize those technologies, more and more water monitoring data became available. Today with WaterSmart, the reads come in once every day, and with that sync in data comes the entire days usage down to the hour interval – so it's not just a total for the day. There is a device on each meter that takes a snapshot of the water usage at regular intervals and it stores that days data, before sending it out as a batch once a

day. With this information, customers are able to be notified within 24-48 hours of any continuous water flow going through their meter of at least 3 gallons per hour – which generally catches even the silent toilet leaks that are only detectable with dye strips. Now customers can get this information any time they would like, they can set up text, phone, or email alerts, and even set up customized alerts if they're going out of town or something like that. Staff also have access to these alerts going out and we monitor them so we can follow up and attempt to make contact with customers that are missing the email alert, or are out of town.

Not every district has an adjustment or leak forgiveness program, and the way the programs are run vary from district to district. There are districts that have never had adjustment programs, districts that have retired them in recent years for many of the same reasons our District has, and others that continue to keep them.

With all of these advancements, additional monitoring, as well as continued advisement by legal counsel – from their own interpretation of the law, as well as other cases that have emerged over the years, the Leak Adjustment Program was retired. Without a program in place, there is no means to process or calculate a bill adjustment due to a leak, which leaves the appeal process, which Kathy reviewed in her previous email. It's a process you are welcome to take part in if you choose.

I hope this provides additional context and information. If you have any questions, or if you'd like to discuss further, please let me know.



Rahni Jensen

Executive Assistant / Board Clerk

Direct: 831-600-1901

rjensen@svwd.org

From: Sreeparna <nishaadh@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, October 30, 2025 5:45 PM
To: Kathy Ballinger <KBallinger@svwd.org>
Subject: Re: Requesting Leak Adjustment Credit for 015473-000

Thanks Kathy! In page 4-4, Section 4.40.020 Water Rates, the updated Admin Code you shared states---

"The District may grant adjustments to water bills in the following instances: waiving penalties, billing error corrections, **leak adjustments** and others as found necessary."

So, despite having this in the Admin Code, *every single request has been denied at every step of the appeal process* like you noted in your email above? While I trust that acceptance/denial depends on circumstances and history, I find it odd to learn that every single one has been denied.

Sreeparna

On Thu, Oct 30, 2025 at 4:04 PM Kathy Ballinger <KBallinger@svwd.org> wrote:

Hi Barun,

Please view our current Administrative Code at https://www.svwd.org/media/Programs-Policies-Admin_Code/Administrative_Code.pdf

This has also been updated on our website.

Regards,



Kathy Ballinger

Utility Service Specialist
Phone: 831-438-2363

kballinger@svwd.org

From: Sreeparna <nishaadh@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, October 30, 2025 3:49 PM
To: Kathy Ballinger <KBallinger@svwd.org>
Subject: Re: Requesting Leak Adjustment Credit for 015473-000

Hi Kathy,

Thank you for your detailed reply. So, is this Administrative Code outdated?

https://www.svwd.org/media/Programs-Policies-Admin_Code/Administrative_Code.pdf

If yes, can you please email me the updated Administrative Code?

Thanks!

Barun

On Thu, Oct 30, 2025 at 9:33 AM Kathy Ballinger <KBallinger@svwd.org> wrote:

Good morning,

Scotts Valley Water District does not have a leak adjustment program. On your recent billing for the month of September, your water consumption amount billed was \$69.90.

If you'd like to initiate an appeal with the Board of Directors, we will need a letter, email, or something in writing from you addressed to the Board of Directors. If this is something you decide to initiate, feel free to send the letter to the Board to myself or mailed/dropped off to our office at 2 Civic Center Drive in Scotts Valley. This letter would be reviewed at a Finance & Personnel committee meeting, which is comprised of two Board members and two members of the community. They make a recommendation to approve or deny the request. Based on their recommendation, you can decide whether to continue with the process and take it to the following Board of Directors meeting where the full Board would review the request and provide a final approval or denial.

I will let you know that since the retirement of the previous leak adjustment program, several requests have been presented to the Board, and for the same reasons that the program was retired, every single request has been denied at every step of the appeal process. The District has been advised by legal counsel that leak adjustments do not adhere to Proposition 218. For the District to continue operating in accordance with best practices, the program was retired and has not been reinstated in any form since, and there have been no exceptions. Additionally, the conversation from the Board as additional requests have been processed, has remained the same – with the introduction of WaterSmart to notify customers directly of any potential leaks within 24 – 48 hours along with increased monitoring and notification from Staff, it's provided customers immensely more information and agency to maintain their personal property; it is undetermined how a bill adjustment for a leak could be calculated that does not go against Proposition 218; and lastly, with every other request denied prior, a long standing precedent has already been established.

Regards,



Kathy Ballinger

Utility Service Specialist
Phone: 831-438-2363

kballinger@svwd.org

From: Sreeparna <nishaadh@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, October 27, 2025 10:19 PM
To: Customer Contact <Contact@svwd.org>
Subject: Requesting Leak Adjustment Credit for 015473-000

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Good morning,

I am writing to request a lead adjustment credit.

We are new residents of Scotts Valley. We recently purchased a house at 211 Bean Creek Rd, Unit 15, Scotts Valley, CA 95066 and set up water service to begin around 18th August 2025 bearing **Account number:** 015473-000. However, we moved into this home only on 18th October 2025. Within this time we did not live here at all (as our water usage history will demonstrate).

Now, quite shockingly, we learnt about a possible water leak episode that occurred between the evening of September 4th through the morning of September 5th resulting in a use of **5712 (2777+2935) gallons of water** within *just about 17-18 hours!*

We still do not know the cause but this was totally unexpected and outside our control.

Since that episode, we have checked our pipes, made sure all taps/faucets, toilets, irrigation system etc are functioning properly, alerted our neighbors, our HOA, and have increased surveillance as well just in case this was a case of theft. Whatever was the cause, such a **massive** use within about 18 hours is baffling and was completely beyond our control and our knowledge.

You can also see from the record that no such incident has occurred since then. I would therefore like to request the Water Department to kindly excuse the charges for that episode between the evening of September 4th through the morning of September 5th amounting to 5712 (2777+2935) gallons of water both as a courtesy as well as in consideration of the fact that we are new owners who were not living there at the time and did not anticipate such a phenomenal and sudden leak/theft of water!

Can the water department please consider this request from a new owner and in fact new residents of Scotts Valley and issue a one-time waiver of this usage?

Thank you for looking into my request
Sreeparna