

Example: How Water Rate Changes Affect a Typical Residential Bill

(Based on a real Abilene household with basic residential use)

Current Monthly Charges (Before Rate Changes)

Line Item	Current Monthly Amount
Water – Residential Usage	\$35.85
Water – Protection Fee	\$0.12
Total Water Charges	\$35.97
Sewer, Storm Drainage, Recycling	\$50.02
Total Utility Bill	\$85.99

How the Water Portion Changes Over Time

(Year-to-year changes shown; estimates for illustration only)

This table reflects only the water portion of the bill. Other utility charges are not included.

Year	Rate Adjustment	Estimated Water Charges	Change From Prior Year
Current	—	\$35.97	—
2026	+45%	~\$52.15	+~\$16.18
2027	+9%	~\$56.85	+~\$4.70
2028	+9%	~\$61.97	+~\$5.12
2029	+9%	~\$67.55	+~\$5.58
2030	+9%	~\$73.63	+~\$6.08

Estimates rounded for clarity. Actual bills vary based on water use.

Understanding Proposed Water Rate Changes: What They Really Mean for Residents

When the City of Abilene hired Raftelis to conduct a comprehensive cost-of-service and rate study, the goal was simple: determine what it would take to keep the community's water system safe, reliable, and financially sustainable for years to come.

The study found that the City's water fund reserves, used for several years to cover routine operations, would be depleted by the end of 2025. To correct this imbalance and begin addressing the long-term needs of aging infrastructure, the report recommended a 45 percent rate adjustment in 2026, followed by 9 percent annual increases through 2030.

The proposed rate structure also introduced inclining block rates for residential customers, keeping essential indoor water use at the lowest price while moving heavier outdoor and seasonal use into higher tiers. High-volume users, such as those irrigating large lawns, will see more noticeable increases because their water use places the greatest demand on the system during peak periods.

Commercial and irrigation customers will also see adjustments, including a uniform commercial rate per thousand gallons and a new irrigation rate.

Even with these changes, Abilene's water bills remain below the regional average.

City water customers should expect their March 15, 2026, bill to reflect an increase in their water usage rates.

Please contact Jon Quinday, Interim City Manager, at 785-263-2550, or 419 N. Broadway, with any questions.