

## **Statement of Support:**

The Greater San Antonio Chamber recognizes the critical importance of continued investment in our region's water infrastructure to support long-term economic growth, system reliability, and quality of life. As one of the fastest-growing regions in the country, San Antonio must continue to plan proactively to meet future water demands and ensure the resiliency of our infrastructure.

The Greater Chamber supports thoughtful and strategic infrastructure investment, including the proposed investments necessary to maintain and modernize critical water infrastructure and the associated rate adjustments proposed by SAWS. Support for additional investment must be accompanied by strong accountability, operational clarity, and measurable progress in addressing the infrastructure and system management challenges currently facing the community.

As discussions continue regarding the proposed rate increase, Greater Chamber members have expressed growing concern regarding accountability, oversight, and responsiveness related to SAWS operations and governance. It is essential that City Council, along with SAWS leadership itself, continue to elevate their commitment to transparency and financial stewardship as well as SAWS' responsiveness to the needs of ratepayers and taxpayers.

Of particular concern is the urgent and ongoing issue of widespread water loss throughout the community. SAWS' long-range planning documents rightly acknowledge the importance of reducing water loss through improved leak detection, faster response times, infrastructure replacement, meter modernization, and stronger system management. Water loss at the scale currently being experienced represents not only financial inefficiency, but the loss of an increasingly scarce and valuable public resource. This issue requires aggressive corrective action.

The Greater Chamber encourages SAWS staff and the Board of Trustees to more frequently and publicly report against clear operational performance benchmarks tied to leak reduction, infrastructure replacement, response times, and non-revenue water reduction goals already identified within the utility's planning framework. This should include regular public reporting on progress toward stated Gallons per Connection per Day reduction targets, water main replacement priorities, leak response performance, and infrastructure modernization efforts. Enhanced communication of these accountability measures will help build public confidence that infrastructure investments are being managed efficiently and responsibly.

The Chamber also believes it is important for SAWS to be more detailed in how proposed rate adjustments affect various customer classes. While the proposed increase is often characterized as averaging approximately \$5 per month, customers using more than 10,000 gallons per month, commercial users, irrigation customers, and businesses located outside San Antonio city limits are subject to significantly higher increases under the current proposal. As the premier organization representing the

business community, the Greater Chamber believes these impacts should be more clearly communicated and carefully considered as part of public discussion.

Several businesses have also expressed frustration with insufficient coordination among agencies and infrastructure partners during economic development and construction projects, resulting in unnecessary delays, disruptions, and added costs. As San Antonio continues to compete for jobs and investment, stronger collaboration and operational alignment across entities will be essential.

The Greater Chamber supports infrastructure investments that position San Antonio for long-term success and strengthen the reliability of our water system. The proposed rate adjustments should be accompanied by clear accountability measures like those listed above, clear reporting, improved coordination, and demonstrated progress in addressing the operational and infrastructure challenges most affecting our community today.