

IS SUCH AN EDU SYSTEM FAIR AND EQUITABLE?

Some people use more or less water, but the average amount is fair. It's similar to a postage stamp—some people live closer or further from the post office, but each pays the same to deliver a letter. The other advantage of using an EDU calculation is that eliminates the need to argue about water used for irrigation, car washing or other uses in which all the water doesn't return to the sewer system.

WHEN WILL THE NEW SEWER USE FEE BECOME EFFECTIVE?

The sewer use fees will become effective on July 1, 2007, and the first bills will likely be mailed in August 2007.

HOW MUCH WILL MY SEWER USE FEE BE?

The Town is currently conducting a study to calculate sewer use fees. It's fairly simple to identify the amounts of money to be raised – it's basically tied to the operating budget plus a small allowance for reserves. The real challenge lies in identifying the number of EDUs and verifying which properties will pay the sewer use fee. The Town expects to have a preliminary estimate of Fiscal Year 2007 Sewer Use Fee amounts by December 2006, with final 2007 Sewer Use Fee amounts proposed by The Water Pollution Control Authority in May 2007.

Town of Branford
SEWER USE FEE PROGRAM
P.O. BOX 150
BRANFORD, CT 06405



Town of Branford Connecticut

INFORMATION ON THE TOWN'S SEWER USE FEE PROGRAM

WATCH FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT THE
NEW SEWER USE FEE PROGRAM. CHECK THE TOWN'S
WEBSITE AT WWW.BRANFORD-CT.GOV.

**AN INFORMATIONAL MEETING WILL
BE HELD ON OCTOBER 18TH, 2006,
AT 6:00 PM AT THE HIGH SCHOOL
AUDITORIUM.**

INTRODUCTION

Over the past several years, Branford has invested considerable sums in upgrading and improving the Town's sewer system. As you probably know, some areas of the Town are sewerred and some are not. The State has formally cited Branford in the past for sewer overflows; these occur mostly during rainy weather. The Town has vigorously defended the actions it has taken to safeguard water quality, and after much discussion and many meetings, has negotiated a settlement to resolve the State's complaints about sewer overflows. The Town's agreed settlement with the State is reflected in a consent decree which specifies several actions that the Town must take. Among the actions required of the Town is the establishment of a separate sewer use fee for those residents who discharge to the Town's sewer system. This mailing is an effort by the Town to educate and inform its residents about the impact of the sewer use fee on the Town's citizens.

HOW HAS THE TOWN PAID FOR SEWER SERVICES IN THE PAST?

Branford has traditionally used dedicated property tax revenues to pay for both the operating costs and the capital costs of sewage collection and treatment and to pay for septic system pump-outs for those residents who do not have sewer service.

WHY CAN'T WE KEEP USING PROPERTY TAXES TO PAY FOR SEWER SERVICE?

One of the conditions that the State of Connecticut required as part of its settlement agreement with the Town is that a sewer use fee be developed and implemented. The State's position is that there is not a very direct relationship between the assessed value of a property and the amount of sewage that is generated from the property. The Town was able to convince the State to agree to the Town's continued use of dedicated property taxes to pay for the capital costs of the sewer system and for periodic pump-outs for those properties that are not sewerred.

WHO WILL HAVE TO PAY THE NEW SEWER USE FEE?

The sewer use fee will be billed to those properties that are connected to the Town's sewer system. The Town has prepared a map that generally identifies the portions of Town that have sewer service and those portions of the Town that do not have sewer service. This map is available on the Town's website, at www.branford-ct.gov/sewer%20map.htm. There is a small number of properties in the sewer service areas that are not connected to the sewer system; these properties will not have to pay the sewer use fee.

WHAT COSTS WILL BE INCLUDED IN THE NEW SEWER USE FEE?

The sewer use fee will include the operating costs of the sewer system plus some small amounts of administrative costs and financial reserves. The total amounts of money to be collected via the sewer use fee will be determined by the normal budget approval process used by the Town.

HOW WILL THE SEWER USE FEE BE CALCULATED?

Once the total amount of revenue to be raised by the sewer use fee is determined, that amount will be divided by the number of equivalent dwelling units ("EDUs") in the Town. For regulatory purposes, an EDU is defined as the average amount of water used by a typical residential customer, including an allowance for peaking. Most states consider a range of 250 – 300 gallons per day per household as a typical EDU. Each residential customer will be charged the same sewer use fee. Non-residential dischargers are converted to EDUs based upon their water use or a proxy for water use (e.g., a restaurant might have its water usage divided by 250, by the number of seats, or by its square footage). Customers who use more than 25,000 gallons of water per day will be billed on a cost per gallon.