



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

AGENDA ITEM

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

VACANT
First District

JOEL ANDERSON
Second District

TERRA LAWSON-REMER
Third District

MONICA MONTGOMERY STEPPE
Fourth District

JIM DESMOND
Fifth District

DATE: May 6, 2025

17

TO: Board of Supervisors

SUBJECT

NOTICED PUBLIC HEARING: ADOPT A RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING COUNTY COUNSEL HOURLY BILLING RATES FOR ATTORNEY AND PARALEGAL SERVICES (DISTRICTS: ALL)

OVERVIEW

Today's action requests that the Board of Supervisors adopt a resolution relating to hourly billing rates for the Office of County Counsel. The proposed rates are the result of an analysis of County Counsel's services and costs to determine whether the full cost of its services are recovered pursuant to Board of Supervisors Policy B-29 "Fees, Grants, Revenue Contracts – Department Responsibility for Cost Recovery" (Board Policy B-29).

The Auditor and Controller has reviewed and approved the supporting documentation and methodology for establishing the rates in this proposal for Fiscal Year 2025-26.

Today's action includes adoption of a resolution relating to County Counsel hourly billing rates. If approved, the proposed resolution will take effect on July 1, 2025.

RECOMMENDATION

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

1. Pursuant to Article IX, Section 143, of the San Diego County Administrative Code, adopt a resolution entitled:

A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF THE COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO RELATING TO COUNTY COUNSEL HOURLY BILLING RATES FOR ATTORNEY AND PARALEGAL SERVICES

EQUITY IMPACT STATEMENT

The proposed action would amend the attorney and paralegal hourly billing rates for legal services provided to billable clients, including County departments, special districts, and enterprise funds. These rates are intended to cover the full cost of County Counsel's services. By collecting the full cost of services, the County ensures that services that benefit a single agency or individual does not reduce the resources that could be available to the entire region for other vital services that are provided by County departments.

SUBJECT: NOTICED PUBLIC HEARING: ADOPT A RESOLUTION
ESTABLISHING COUNTY COUNSEL HOURLY BILLING RATES FOR
ATTORNEY AND PARALEGAL SERVICES (DISTRICTS: ALL)

SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT STATEMENT

The proposed rates support the recovery of County Counsel's full cost of providing legal services. This helps the County achieve economic sustainability and long-term fiscal stability by aligning resources with services, while continuing to provide critical services.

FISCAL IMPACT

Funds for this proposal will be included in the Fiscal Year 2025-27 CAO Recommended Operational Plan for Office of County Counsel. If approved, the proposed rates will ensure full cost recovery for services provided. Further, the proposed attorney and paralegal rates are projected to result in approximately \$3,200,000.00 of annual revenue generated from the hourly billable services provided to clients. There will be no change in net General Fund cost and no additional staff years.

BUSINESS IMPACT STATEMENT

N/A

ADVISORY BOARD STATEMENT

N/A

BACKGROUND

The Office of County Counsel provides legal services to billable clients, including County departments, special districts, and enterprise funds. County Counsel's current legal services billing rates are \$286.00 per attorney hour and \$151.00 per paralegal hour. County Counsel conducted a review of its attorney and paralegal hourly billing rates by performing a full cost study. The study was based on projected Fiscal Year 2025-26 costs for salaries and benefits and services and supplies, as well as an average of five years' productive hours for billable attorneys and paralegals. The full cost recovery study concluded that the County Counsel billing rates for attorney and paralegal services should be established as follows:

| Attorney Hourly Billing Rate | Paralegal Hourly Billing Rate |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| \$282.00 | \$149.00 |

The decrease in rates is primarily due to a change in methodology to use a five-year average in the time study which provides a longer period to consider trends and outliers. The more recent previous years' rates used a three-year average. The Auditor and Controller has reviewed and approved the rates above, affirming that the methodology used is consistent with Board Policy B-29, and is in conformance with existing cost policies and procedures. The rate changes will go into effect on July 1, 2025.

LINKAGE TO THE COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO STRATEGIC PLAN

Today's proposed action to adopt a resolution and approve the hourly billing rates charged by Office of County Counsel supports the Sustainability and Empower Strategic Initiatives in the

SUBJECT: NOTICED PUBLIC HEARING: ADOPT A RESOLUTION
ESTABLISHING COUNTY COUNSEL HOURLY BILLING RATES FOR
ATTORNEY AND PARALEGAL SERVICES (DISTRICTS: ALL)

County of San Diego's 2025-2030 Strategic Plan by aligning the County's available resources with services to maintain fiscal stability and fiscal integrity.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ebony N. Shelton', written in a cursive style.

EBONY N. SHELTON
Chief Administrative Officer

ATTACHMENT

Attachment A: A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF THE COUNTY
OF SAN DIEGO RELATING TO COUNTY COUNSEL HOURLY BILLING RATES FOR
ATTORNEY AND PARALEGAL SERVICES