

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

505 VAN NESS AVENUE
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94102-3298



March 17, 2020

VIA E-MAIL

Jeffrey T. Linam
Vice President, Rates & Regulatory
California-American Water Company
4701 Beloit Drive
Sacramento, CA 95838-2434

John Tang
Vice President, Regulatory Affairs
San Jose Water Company
110 West Taylor Street
San Jose, CA 95110-2131

Natalie Wales
Director, Regulatory Policy & Compliance
California Water Service Company
1720 North First Street
San Jose, CA 95112-4598

Robert L. Kelly
Vice President, Regulatory Affairs
Suburban Water Systems
1325 N. Grand Ave., Ste. 100
Covina, CA 91724-4044

Jon Pierotti
Regulatory Affairs Manager
Golden State Water Company
630 East Foothill Blvd
San Dimas, CA 91773

Thomas Adcock
President
Alisal Water Corporation
249 Williams Road
Salinas, CA 93905

Timothy Guster
General Counsel
Legal and Regulatory Affairs
Great Oaks Water Company
PO Box 23490
San Jose, CA 95153-3490

Tim Bakman
Bakman Water Company
PO Box 7965
Fresno, CA 93747

Edward N. Jackson
Director, Rates and Regulatory Affairs
Liberty Utilities, Park Water,
Apple Valley Ranchos Water
PO Box 7002
9750 Washburn Road
Downey, CA 90241

Robert Fortino
Del Oro Water Company
Drawer 5172
Chico, CA 95927

Joel M. Reiker
Vice President of Regulatory Affairs
San Gabriel Valley Water Company
11142 Garvey Avenue
El Monte, CA 91733-2498

Lawrence Morales
Vice President/General Manager
East Pasadena Water Company
3725 East Mountain View Avenue
Pasadena, CA 91107

SUBJECT: Emergency Customer Protections to Support Customers Affected by the COVID-19 State of Emergency

I write to you in response to Governor Gavin Newsom's proclamation of a state of emergency in California due to the spread of COVID-19. This letter serves as notification that the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) plans to take action to provide emergency customer protection measures for customers in California to prevent disconnections for unpaid bills during the pendency of the emergency. You should act on the customer protections measures described in this letter immediately; the CPUC will vote to ratify these measures in the near future.

On March 4, 2020, Governor Newsom declared a State of Emergency in California related to COVID-19. On March 12, 2020, Governor Newsom issued a new Executive Order¹ recognizing that individuals exposed to COVID-19 may be unable to report to work due to illness or quarantines, and ordering numerous measures including social distancing. On March 16, 2020, Governor Newsom issued an Executive Order² requesting that the CPUC monitor the measures undertaken by public and private utility providers to implement customer service protections in response to COVID-19.

It is clear that the response to COVID-19 will be extremely disruptive to all Californians and will impact many Californians' ability to work. We have dealt with highly disruptive events in the recent past, with the devastating wildfires in Northern and Southern California. In response, the CPUC adopted a series of requirements for utility companies (electric, gas, water, sewer) and communications providers, culminating in customer protections measures adopted in two decisions (D.)19-07-015 and D.19-08-025. These customer protection measures apply in cases where the declared emergency relates to the disruption of service or to the degradation of service.

¹ Executive Order N-25-20, available at <https://www.gov.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/3.12.20-EO-N-25-20-COVID-19.pdf>

²² Executive Order N-28-20, available at <https://www.gov.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/3.16.20-Executive-Order.pdf>

COVID-19 has not resulted in the same disruptions or degradations to utility service in California as the recent wildfires. We expect that utility services will remain reliable and assist in California's COVID-19 response by allowing more people to safely self-quarantine or telework. Despite the differences in the cause of the emergencies, the customer protections adopted in D.19-07-015 and D.19-08-025, which include moratoriums on disconnections, can mitigate some of the disruptions to Californians' daily lives related to the COVID-19 response – especially those Californians who are economically vulnerable. In response to COVID-19, some utilities and service providers have already announced voluntary moratoriums on service disconnections for non-payment.

Because of the seriousness of the situation, we expect the utilities and service providers subject to D.19-07-015 and D.19-08-025 to extend the same applicable customer protections directed in D.19-07-015 and D.19-08-025 to customers in response to the declared state of emergency due to the spread of COVID-19. We also expect the utilities and service providers to report to the CPUC on all customer protection measures they implement in response to COVID-19 as soon as they are implemented, so that the CPUC may publicly report on these measures. These customer protections should be retroactively applied to March 4, 2020.

Subject to CPUC action to ratify this direction, the utilities and service providers will be expected to file an advice letter reporting compliance with implementing the mandated customer protections.

Sincerely,



Alice Stebbins
Executive Director

CC: President Marybel Batjer, CPUC
Commissioner Martha Guzman Aceves, CPUC
Commissioner Liane Randolph, CPUC
Commissioner Clifford Rechtschaffen, CPUC
Commissioner Genevieve Shiroma, CPUC

Maryam Ebke, Deputy Executive Director, CPUC
Lucian Filler, Deputy Executive Director, CPUC
Edward Randolph, Deputy Executive Director, CPUC
Hazel Miranda, Office of Government Affairs Director, CPUC
Service List to R.18-03-011