

MOTION BY SUPERVISORS SHEILA KUEHL AND
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March 31, 2020

**WATER UTILITY SHUTOFF MORATORIUM FOR ALL LOS ANGELES COUNTY
CUSTOMERS OVER WHOM LOS ANGELES COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC
HEALTH MAINTAINS JURISDICTION**

There is a recognized need for all LA County residents and “essential businesses” to have access to safe drinking water during the COVID-19 global pandemic. The Board of Supervisors’ emergency proclamation of March 20, 2020 makes explicit that “ensuring that all people in the County continue to have access to running water during this public health crisis will enable compliance with public health guidelines advising people to regularly wash their hands, maintain access to clean drinking water, help prevent the spread of COVID-19, and prevent or alleviate illness or death due to the virus.”

The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health bears responsibility to protect the health and well-being for all persons in the County, over which it exerts authority, including residents and businesses in 86 of Los Angeles County’s 88 cities and all unincorporated areas. While many LA County residents and essential businesses are already protected against water shutoffs under a variety of measures taken by various government and utility actions, many remain

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subject to shutoff for non-payment.

The California Public Utilities Commission issued a moratorium on private utility shutoffs due to unpaid fees for up to twelve months (adopted on March 17, 2020), which protects 17.3% of County water customers. Additionally, the City of Los Angeles' Department of Water and Power (LADWP) issued a moratorium on utility shutoffs "through the end of the local emergency period" per Mayor Garcetti's announcement of March 24, 2020. Apart from LADWP, nearly 25% of the County's water utility customers are served by one of 44 city-run water systems, and only a few (including Burbank, Glendale, Long Beach, Pasadena, and Signal Hill) have announced moratoria on water utility shutoffs. Roughly another 20% of the County's water customers are served by mutual water agencies or special districts.

While the Governor's Emergency Declaration of March 16 requests the California Public Utilities Commission to "monitor measures undertaken by public and private utility providers to implement customer service protections for critical utilities, including but not limited to electric, gas, water internet, landline telephone, and cell phone service, in response to COVID-19," it stopped short of instituting a state-wide moratorium on utility shutoffs.

The Board of Supervisors' emergency proclamation directed the Director of the Department of Consumer and Business Affairs ("DCBA"), in collaboration with the Chief Executive Office and the Acting Director of Workforce Development, Aging, and Community Services ("WDACS"), to convene representatives of utility and service providers to seek a commitment from the providers to waive any late fees and forgo service disconnections for tenants and small businesses who are suffering economic loss and hardship as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, given the fast-moving nature of the COVID-19 crisis, there is an urgent need to move swiftly to avoid

water shutoffs for customers who are currently subject to losing access to clean water.

WE, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors direct the Chief Executive Officer and the Director of the Department of Public Health, in coordination with the Director of DCBA, the Director of the Department of Public Works and the Acting Director of WDACS to:

1. Develop and implement emergency customer protections to prevent disconnections of water service for unpaid bills for the duration of the COVID19 emergency, retroactive to the Governor's March 4, 2020 Declaration of a State of Emergency;
2. Develop and implement a plan to waive the imposition of late fees, to suspend the use of liens, and create a system to provide extended repayment plans; and
3. Restore water service to those disconnected due to unpaid bills in the past 30 days.

WE FURTHER MOVE that the Board of Supervisors direct the Chief Executive Officer and Department of Public Health to require special water districts, mutual water companies, city-run systems, and any other water purveyors under the purview of the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health to enact these emergency customer protections if they have not already adopted their own moratoria on water service shutoffs.