

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

505 VAN NESS AVENUE
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August 24, 2021

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

Dear Ms. Wales,

The Commission has approved California Water Service Company's Advice Letter No. 2414, filed on June 24, 2021, regarding COVID-19 Emergency Customer Protections Compliance Filing #3.

Enclosed is a copy of the advice letter, effective June 24, 2021, for the utility's files.

Please contact Jefferson Hancock at JHO@cpuc.ca.gov or 415-703-3453, if you have any questions.

Thank you,

/s/ROBIN BRYANT

Robin Bryant
Water Division

Enclosures

**CALIFORNIA PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION
DIVISION OF WATER AND AUDITS**

Advice Letter Cover Sheet

Utility Name: California Water Service Company All Regulated Areas (including District: Grand Oaks and Travis) CPUC Utility #: U-60-W Advice Letter #: 2414 Tier: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Compliance Authorization: Resolutions M-4842 and M-4849 Description: COVID-19 Emergency Customer Protections Compliance Filing #3	Date Mailed to Service List: 06/24/2021 Protest Deadline (20th Day): 07/14/2021 Review Deadline (30th Day): 07/24/2021 Requested Effective Date: n/a Rate Impact: none
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The protest or response deadline for this advice letter is 20 days from the date that this advice letter was mailed to the service list. Please see the "Response or Protest" section in the advice letter for more information.

Utility Contact: Natalie Wales

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Utility Contact: Sean Su

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DWA Contact: Tariff Unit

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Email: Water.Division@cpuc.ca.gov

DWA USE ONLY

DATE

STAFF

COMMENTS

☐ APPROVED

☐ WITHDRAWN

☐ REJECTED

Signature: _____

Comments: _____

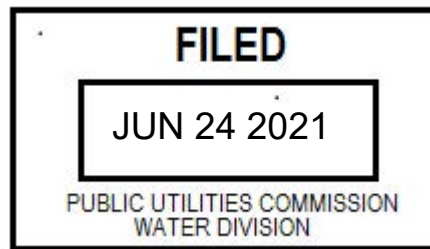
Date: _____



CALIFORNIA WATER SERVICE COMPANY
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SAN JOSE, CA 95112 • (408) 367-8200 • F (408) 367-8428

June 24, 2021

Advice Letter No. 2414



To the California Public Utilities Commission:

California Water Service Company ("Cal Water") respectfully submits this Tier 1 advice letter applicable to all regulated areas in California (including Grand Oaks and the Travis District).

Consistent with the Commission's guidelines during the COVID-19 pandemic, this advice letter is only being distributed electronically to the Water Division and the attached service lists.

Summary

In Resolution M-4842, the Commission adopted emergency protections for residential and small business customers to provide relief for hardships resulting from the Coronavirus Disease 2019 ("COVID-19") pandemic. This Tier 1 advice letter complies with the Commission's June 16, 2021 action letter directing Class A water companies to file a Tier 1 advice letter indicating their extension through September 30, 2021 of both the Emergency Customer Protections in Resolution M-4842 and appropriate memorandum accounts.¹

Background

On April 17, 2020, the Commission issued Resolution M-4842, *Emergency Authorization and Order Directing Utilities to Implement Emergency Customer Protections to Support California Customers During the COVID-19 Pandemic*, and adopted the following relevant Ordering Paragraphs:²

1. Electric, gas, communications, and water and sewer corporations subject to this Resolution shall retroactively apply the customer protection measures adopted in D.19-07-015 and D.19-08-025 from March 4, 2020 onward.
2. To the extent that they have not already done so in response to the Executive Director's March 17, 2020 letter, or to the extent to which their response was not fully responsive to the requirements of this Resolution, electric, gas, communications, and water and sewer corporations subject to this Resolution shall file a Tier 2 Advice Letter describing all reasonable

¹ Letter from Terence Shia, Director of the Water Division, CPUC, to all CPUC-regulated water and sewer utilities with the subject line, "Extension of Emergency Customer Protections to Support California Customers Through September 30, 2021" (dated June 16, 2021).

² Res. M-4842 at 6-7.



and necessary actions to implement the emergency customer protections adopted in D.19-07-015 and D.19-08-025 to support California customers.

3. Commission staff will review the Advice Letters for compliance with the customer protection measures adopted in D.19-07-015 and D.19-08-025.
4. In the Tier 2 Advice Letter required in Ordering Paragraph #2, rate regulated electric, gas, communications, and water and sewer corporations subject to this Resolution may request authorization to track and recover incremental costs associated with complying with this resolution.
5. The Emergency Customer Protections apply to residential and small business customers for up to one year from the date of this Resolution, with the option to extend.
6. The electric, gas, communications, and water and sewer corporations subject to this resolution shall conduct community awareness and public outreach of the customer protection measures adopted in D.19-07-015 and D.19-08-025 consistent with the requirements of D.19-07-015, D.19-08-025, and D.20-03-004.³

The Commission also provided the following guidance with regard to community awareness and public outreach relating to these customer protections:⁴

In D.19-07-015 and D.19-08-025, we directed the utilities and communications service providers to raise awareness about the existence of the emergency customer protections before, during, and after a disaster so customers are prepared. In these decisions, we established a baseline set of required outreach and education activities to ensure ratepayers have robust awareness about the Commission's customer protections.⁵ Then in D.20-03-004 we adopted further in-language community outreach awareness and public outreach requirements before, during and after a wildfire for our regulated, investor-owned electrical utilities.⁶

For meaningful public impact during this COVID-19 crisis, we direct the utilities and communications service providers to conduct outreach of these protections to customers. Outreach and public awareness should

³ The requirements [i]n D.19-08-025 apply to the communications service providers. The requirements in D.19-07-015 and D.20-03-004 apply to the electrical corporations. The requirements of D.19-07-015 apply to the natural gas and Class A and Class B water corporations.

⁴ Res. M-4842 at 9-10.

⁵ D.19-07-015 at 35-37; *see also* D.19-08-025 at 39-42.

⁶ D.20-03-004 at 19-25.



be consistent with D.19-07-015, D.19-08-025, and D.20-03-004 regarding the type of service the various utilities and communications service providers offer.⁷ The utilities and communications service providers have flexibility in how they deliver messages about the customer protections ordered in D.19-07-015, D.19-08-025 and in the languages ordered in D.20-03-004 as long as the messages are designed to reach customers to the maximum extent and aid them in their understanding of these customer protections.

On February 11, 2021, the Commission adopted Resolution M-4849, *Authorization and Order Directing Utilities to Extend Emergency Customer Protections to Support California Customers through June 30, 2021, and to File Transition Plans for the Expiration of the Emergency Customer Protections*.⁸ Resolution M-4849 required the Investor-Owned Utilities (IOUs) to file a transition plan "to facilitate a smooth transition for customers when the Emergency Customer Protections are lifted."⁹ In addition, OP 2 requires IOUs to demonstrate compliance with emergency customer protections through June 30, 2021:

2. Electric, gas, communications, and water corporations subject to this Resolution shall file a Tier 1 Advice Letter no later than 10 days after this Resolution's approval demonstrating compliance with the extension of Emergency Customer Protections to June 30, 2021. Should any of the actions utilities are taking to implement Emergency Customer Protections need be revised from already disposed Resolution M-4842 Advice Letter compliance filings, or if certain customer protections were inapplicable during the pandemic and not already noted and accepted as such in prior filings, these revisions should be noted in the compliance Advice Letter to this Resolution. ... Water corporations shall serve copies of the Advice Letters to R.18-03-011 and R.17-06-024 proceeding service lists. ...¹⁰

On June 11, 2021, the Governor of California signed an Executive Order to extend emergency protections to September 30, 2021. Accordingly, on June 16, 2021 the Commission directed water and sewer utilities to also extend the Emergency Customer Protections and appropriate memorandum accounts through September 30, 2021.

⁷ The requirements in D.19-08-025 apply to the communications service providers. The requirements in D.19-07-015 and D.20-03-004 apply to the electrical corporations. The requirements of D.19-07-015 apply to the natural gas and Class A and Class B water corporations.

⁸ <https://docs.cpuc.ca.gov/PublishedDocs/Published/G000/M365/K448/365448995.PDF>

⁹ Res. M-4849 at 10.

¹⁰ Res. M-4849 at 33.



Discussion

This advice letter is intended to comply with the Commission's June 16, 2021 letter directing water and sewer utilities to extend the Emergency Customer Protections previously requested in Resolution M-4849, through September 30, 2021, and to extend appropriate memorandum accounts under Resolution M-4842, through September 30, 2021.

In response to the March 17, 2020 Letter from Executive Director Stebbins, Cal Water submitted AL 2379 on March 30, 2020 affirming the company's compliance with specific emergency customer protections and outreach activities in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

On May 1, 2020, Cal Water submitted AL 2383 providing a more detailed response to address the seven items listed for water companies in Resolution M-4842, as well as Cal Water's outreach regarding those emergency customer protections.

- (1) Activation of the Catastrophic Event Memorandum Account (CEMA) effective to the date of the Governor's declaration of a state of emergency - March 4, 2020;
 - Cal Water is tracking the costs associated with COVID-19 using an accounting "product code," and sent a letter on April 1, 2020 informing Executive Director Stebbins that it was activating its CEMA for COVID-19 retroactively to March 4, 2020.
- (2) Make insurance claims on all costs and expenses incurred as a result of the pandemic, and credit insurance payments to the CEMA;
 - If Cal Water determines there have been losses related to COVID-19 that qualify for insurance recovery, Cal Water will file such insurance claims and credit any monies received to the CEMA.
- (3) Work cooperatively with affected customers to resolve unpaid bills, and minimize disconnections for non-payment;
- (4) Waive reconnection or facilities fees for customers and suspend deposits for customers who must reconnect to the system;
- (5) Provide reasonable payment options to customers;
 - Consistent with the Emergency Customer Protections described in Items 3, 4, and 5, above, Cal Water has been working with residential and small business customers to resolve unpaid bills, minimize disconnections for nonpayment, provide reasonable payment options, and waive all reconnection fees (Cal Water does not request deposits for initiation of service or charge fees for late payment.)
- (6) Waive bills for victims who lost their homes or if their homes are rendered uninhabitable; and



(7) Authorize a pro rata waiver of any fixed element of a water bill for the time that the home is uninhabitable, even if the reason for it being uninhabitable is not loss of water service.¹¹

- At this time, Cal Water does not believe that the customer protections described in **Items 6 and 7** are applicable to this emergency because the COVID-19 pandemic is not rendering homes uninhabitable in the manner discussed in D.19-07-015.

In addition, Cal Water has suspended shut-offs for nonpayment for all customers, consistent with Executive Orders N-42-20 (April 2, 2020) and N-08-21 (June 4, 2011) of Governor Newsom,¹² and worked to reconnect customers who had been disconnected for nonpayment since March 4, 2020 (and in some cases, since February 27, 2020). Cal Water is also maintaining the participant status of all customers in the Customer Assistance Program (CAP) without requiring recertification. The trend in CAP participation since the start of the pandemic can be seen in the monthly submissions of data filed in R.17.06-024. Cal Water's customer outreach about the emergency customer protections include the following:

- Cal Water is regularly updating local communities and customers as circumstances change.
- Cal Water is rolling out communications about suspension of shut-off for nonpayment and availability of payment arrangements through our website, media, city leaders, social media, email, bill messages or onserts, and talking points for Customer Service Representatives.¹³

With the year-end close of its financial accounting books, Cal Water is now in the process of determining which costs tracked in the CEMA may be incremental to those already in rates.

Requested Effective Date

Pursuant to the Commission's June 16, 2021 action letter, this is being filed as a Tier 1 advice letter. Because it is a compliance filing that does not require any changes to Cal Water's tariffs, Cal Water does not request a specific effective date.

¹¹ Res. M-4842 at 6-7.

¹² <https://www.gov.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/4.2.20-EO-N-42-20.pdf> ; <https://www.gov.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/6.11.21-EO-N-08-21-signed.pdf>.

¹³ The Outreach Plan approved by the Water Division in Advice Letter 2351-A includes communications channels that currently are not appropriate, such providing notifications in customer center lobbies and at community assistance events. Cal Water is using an outreach plan modified to reflect current limitations on mobility due to COVID-19.



Notice

Customer Notice – Customer notice of Tier 1 advice letters is not required under General Order 96-B, General Rule 7.3.1.

Service Lists – In accordance with General Order 96-B, General Rule 4.3 and 7.2 and Water Industry Rule 4.1, a copy of this advice letter will be transmitted **electronically** on **June 24, 2021**, to competing and adjacent utilities and other utilities or interested parties having requested such notification. ***Please note that, consistent with the Commission's guidelines for service during the COVID-19 pandemic, this advice letter will only be distributed electronically.***

Response or Protest

Anyone may respond to or protest this advice letter. A response supports the filing and may contain information that proves useful to the Commission in evaluating the advice letter. A protest objects to the advice letter in whole or in part and must set forth the specific grounds on which it is based. These grounds are:

- (1) The utility did not properly serve or give notice of the advice letter;
- (2) The relief requested in the advice letter would violate statute or Commission order, or is not authorized by statute or Commission order on which the utility relies;
- (3) The analysis, calculations, or data in the advice letter contain material error or omissions;
- (4) The relief requested in the advice letter is pending before the Commission in a formal proceeding; or
- (5) The relief requested in the advice letter requires consideration in a formal hearing, or is otherwise inappropriate for the advice letter process; or
- (6) The relief requested in the advice letter is unjust, unreasonable, or discriminatory (provided that such a protest may not be made where it would require relitigating a prior order of the Commission.)

A protest shall provide citations or proofs where available to allow staff to properly consider the protest. A response or protest must be made in writing or by electronic mail and must be received by the Water Division within 20 days of the date this advice letter is filed. The advice letter process does not provide for any responses, protests or comments, except for the utility's reply, after the 20-day comment period. The address for mailing or delivering a protest is:

Tariff Unit, Water Division 3rd floor
California Public Utilities Commission,
505 Van Ness Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94102
water.division@cpuc.ca.gov

On the same date the response or protest is submitted to the Water Division, the respondent or protestant shall send a copy by mail (or e-mail) to us, addressed to:



CALIFORNIA WATER SERVICE COMPANY

Advice Letter 2414, COVID-19 Customer Protections Compliance Filing #3
Page 8

Natalie Wales
California Water Service Company
1720 North First Street,
San Jose, California 95112
Fax 408/367-8566 or
cwsrates@calwater.com

Cities and counties that need Board of Supervisors or Board of Commissioners approval to protest should inform the Water Division, within the 20-day protest period, so that a late filed protest can be entertained. The informing document should include an estimate of the date the proposed protest might be voted on.

Replies

The utility shall reply to each protest and may reply to any response. Each reply must be received by the Water Division within 5 business days after the end of the protest period, and shall be served on the same day to the person who filed the protest or response. If you have not received a reply to your protest within 10 business days, contact California Water Service Company at 408-367-8200.

CALIFORNIA WATER SERVICE COMPANY

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Natalie Wales".

Natalie Wales
Director of Regulatory Policy and Compliance

cc: Syreeta Gibbs (Public Advocates Office of the CPUC)
PublicAdvocatesWater@cpuc.ca.gov



Antelope Valley District (Los Angeles Region)

ADVICE LETTER FILING MAILING LIST
PER SECTION III (G) OF GENERAL ORDER NO. 96-A

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Bakersfield District

ADVICE LETTER FILING MAILING LIST
PER SECTION III (G) OF GENERAL ORDER NO. 96-A

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Bay Area Region

ADVICE LETTER FILING MAILING LIST
PER SECTION III (G) OF GENERAL ORDER NO. 96-A

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Bay Area Region

ADVICE LETTER FILING MAILING LIST
PER SECTION III (G) OF GENERAL ORDER NO. 96-A

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Bear Gulch District

ADVICE LETTER FILING MAILING LIST
PER SECTION III (G) OF GENERAL ORDER NO. 96-A

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Chico District

ADVICE LETTER FILING MAILING LIST
PER SECTION III (G) OF GENERAL ORDER NO. 96-A

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Dixon District

ADVICE LETTER FILING MAILING LIST
PER SECTION III (G) OF GENERAL ORDER NO. 96-A

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Dominguez District

ADVICE LETTER FILING MAILING LIST
PER SECTION III (G) OF GENERAL ORDER NO. 96-A

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East Los Angeles District

ADVICE LETTER FILING MAILING LIST
PER SECTION III (G) OF GENERAL ORDER NO. 96-A

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Grand Oaks District

ADVICE LETTER FILING MAILING LIST
PER SECTION III (G) OF GENERAL ORDER NO. 96-A

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SUSAN WELLS, ASSISTANT GENERAL MANAGER
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Hermosa-Redondo District

ADVICE LETTER FILING MAILING LIST

PER SECTION III (G) OF GENERAL ORDER NO. 96-A

ANDY DARLAK

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ADVICE LETTER FILING MAILING LIST

PER SECTION III (G) OF GENERAL ORDER NO. 96-A

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ADVICE LETTER FILING MAILING LIST
PER SECTION III (G) OF GENERAL ORDER NO. 96-A

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ADVICE LETTER FILING MAILING LIST
PER SECTION III (G) OF GENERAL ORDER NO. 96-A

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ADVICE LETTER FILING MAILING LIST
PER SECTION III (G) OF GENERAL ORDER NO. 96-A

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ADVICE LETTER FILING MAILING LIST
PER SECTION III (G) OF GENERAL ORDER NO. 96-A

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Palos Verdes District (Los Angeles Region)

ADVICE LETTER FILING MAILING LIST
PER SECTION III (G) OF GENERAL ORDER NO. 96-A



Selma District

ADVICE LETTER FILING MAILING LIST
PER SECTION III (G) OF GENERAL ORDER NO. 96-A

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ADVICE LETTER FILING MAILING LIST
PER SECTION III (G) OF GENERAL ORDER NO. 96-A

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ADVICE LETTER FILING MAILING LIST
PER SECTION III (G) OF GENERAL ORDER NO. 96-A

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Travis District

ADVICE LETTER FILING MAILING LIST
PER SECTION III (G) OF GENERAL ORDER NO. 96-A

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