

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

505 VAN NESS AVENUE  
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94102-3298



March 26, 2021

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

Dear Mr. Tang,

The Commission has approved San Jose Water Company's Advice Letter No. 559, filed on March 4, 2021, regarding Customer Protection compliance filing.

Enclosed is a copy of the advice letter with an effective date of March 4, 2021 for the utility's files.

Please contact Eustace Ednacot at [ERE@cpuc.ca.gov](mailto:ERE@cpuc.ca.gov) or 415-703-1492, if you have any questions.

Thank you,

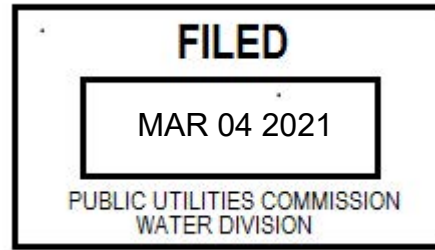
/s/ROBIN BRYANT

Robin Bryant  
Water Division

Enclosures



110 W. Taylor Street  
San Jose, CA 95110-2131



March 4, 2021

California Public Utilities Commission  
505 Van Ness Avenue  
San Francisco, CA 94102

Advice Letter No. 559

Dear Madame/Sir:

San Jose Water Company (SJWC) submits this Tier 1 Advice Letter in compliance with Decision (D.) 19-07-015 issued by the California Public Utilities Commission (Commission) on July 19, 2019. This Advice Letter complies with Ordering Paragraphs 11 and 12 of D.19-7-015.<sup>1</sup>

Compliance with Ordering Paragraph 11 of D.19-07-015

Ordering Paragraph 11 of D.19-07-015 provides:

All Class-A Water utilities (California Water Service Company, California American Water Company, Golden State Water Company, Great Oaks Water Company, Liberty Utilities Apple Valley Ranchos Water, and Park Water), San Jose Water Company, San Gabriel Valley Water Company, and Suburban Water Systems as well as all Class-B utilities (Fruitridge Vista Water Company, Bakman Water Company, Del Oro Water Company, East Pasadena Water Company, Santa Catalina Island Water (a division of Southern California Edison Company), and Alco Water Service).), shall file a Tier 1 Advice Letter at the default, 12-month conclusion of customer protection period (running from the date that customer protections related to the specific disaster became effective), or as reasonably determined by the Governor's Office of Emergency Services, detailing the mandated protections offered to the customer affected by the disaster, the start and end periods customers received the emergency customer protections, the outreach efforts conducted, the customer impacts, and the associated cost.

A. Mandated Protections Offered to SJWC's Customers

On March 4, 2020, Governor Newsom declared a State of Emergency in California related to COVID-19. March 4, 2021 is the 12-month anniversary of the declared State of Emergency.

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<sup>1</sup> D.19-07-015, at pp. 67 – 68.

On March 17, 2020, the Commission's Executive Director issued a letter to all Class A and B water utilities indicating that the Commission expected "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." The same letter also stated:

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.

On March 19, 2020, SJWC filed Advice Letter 546 Regarding Compliance with D.19-07-015 and the Executive Director's March 17, 2020 letter. In Advice Letter 546, SJWC confirmed that it had implemented its Emergency Disaster Relief Protections previously submitted with its Advice Letter 536 and that such protections would be retroactively applied to March 4, 2020, consistent with the Executive Director's March 17, 2020 letter. A copy of SJWC's Emergency Customer Protections is attached hereto as Exhibit A. The Commission's Water Division approved Advice Letter 546 on March 24, 2020, with an effective date of March 4, 2020.

In addition, SJWC also detailed other actions it is taking in response to the declared State of Emergency in its response to Mr. Lee Palmer of the Commission's Safety and Enforcement Division dated March 27, 2020, including:

1. Activating our Emergency Operations Center and executing our COVID-19 Pandemic and Business Continuity Plans adhering to the guidance provided by the CDC and other state and local health authorities;
2. Implementing remote work for all employees to the extent their job responsibilities do not require their presence at our offices or field locations;
3. Taking additional health and safety measures to ensure the safety of employees who are not working remotely; and
4. Keeping customers informed through frequent website updates and social media feeds.

On April 2, 2020, Governor Newsom issued Executive Order N-42-20 instituting a "shutoff moratorium" – a prohibition against discontinuing service for nonpayment – during the COVID-19 State of Emergency. SJWC has fully complied with this Executive Order and no customer has had water service disconnected for nonpayment during the State of Emergency.

The Commission issued Resolution (Res.) M-4842 on April 17, 2020, which directed utilities to implement Emergency Customer Protections to Support California Customers During the COVID-19 Pandemic. In response thereto, SJWC filed Advice Letter 549 on May 1, 2020 showing compliance with Res. M-4842. In Advice Letter 549, SJWC confirmed that it had already acted upon the first five of the seven Emergency Customer Protections for Water Customers listed actions in Res. M-4842.<sup>2</sup> SJWC also sought an exemption for the final two Emergency Customer Protections for Water Customers since they were not applicable to the current pandemic emergency. Advice Letter 549 was approved by the Commission's Water Division on May 20, 2020.

On February 12, 2021, the Commission issued Res. M-4849, which authorized and directed utilities to extend Emergency Customer Protections to support California customers through June 30, 2021, and to file Transition Plans for the expiration of Emergency Customer Protections.

Res. M-4849 required investor-owned Class A and B water utilities to file a Tier 1 Advice Letter within 10 days of the issuance of Res. M-4849 demonstrating compliance with the Extension of Emergency Customer Protections to June 30, 2021. On February 19, 2021, SJWC filed Advice Letter 558 confirming its extension of the five listed Emergency Customer Protections in Res. M-4849<sup>3</sup> to June 30, 2021.

Res. M-4849 also required the Class A and B water utilities to submit draft Transition Plan Advice Letters to CPUC staff by February 25, 2021, containing draft Transition Plans containing the following elements:

1. Activities Timeline;
2. Marketing, Education, and Outreach Strategy;
3. Compliance and Safety; and
4. Progress Tracking and Reporting.

On February 25, 2021, SJWC submitted its Draft Transition Plan Advice Letter as directed. SJWC's Draft Transition Plan included information about each of the four elements listed above.

**B. Start and End Date of Emergency Customer Protections.**

All Emergency Customer Protections described above began on March 4, 2020, and all will remain in place for SJWC's customers through at least June 30, 2021.

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<sup>2</sup> Res. M-4842, at p. 7.

<sup>3</sup> Res. M-4849, at p. 7.

C. Outreach Efforts, Customer Impacts, and Associated Costs.

Throughout the declared State of Emergency, SJWC has provided information to customers through its website, periodic mailings, and its Customer Service representatives. Included in these outreach efforts has been information about bill payment options and encouragement to customers to address past-due bills in full or in part during the pandemic emergency period so that customers are not faced with large past-due balances at the end of the emergency period.

SJWC continues to report the pandemic's financial impacts to the Commission's Water Division as well as through R.17-06-024. The financial impacts reported by SJWC consisted of a summary of customer past-due balances in 30-day aging categories (0 – 30 days, 30 – 60 days, 60 – 90 days, 90 – 120 days, and over 120 days). Under current Commission-authorized tariffs, a bill becomes past due if not paid within 19 days after mailing. Under Commission-authorized tariffs, residential customers may not have service disconnected for nonpayment until at least 79 days after a bill is mailed. During the pandemic emergency period, there have been no service disconnections for nonpayment. The financial impacts consist of customers with past-due balances and SJWC having not received those customer payments. SJWC has also reported on customers enrolled in its Water Rate Assistance Program (WRAP), both in terms of the number of enrollees and the past-due balances of those enrolled in the WRAP.

Costs associated with SJWC's outreach efforts have been kept low through a combination of traditional means such as bill inserts and media placement as well as new methods involving our website and social media. We will continue to pursue these methods in 2021 and book their associated incremental costs to the CEMA.

Compliance with Ordering Paragraph 12 of D.19-07-015.

Ordering Paragraph 12 of D.19-07-015 provides:

All Class-A Water utilities (California Water Service Company, California American Water Company, Golden State Water Company, Great Oaks Water Company, Liberty Utilities (Apple Valley Ranchos Water, and Park Water), San Jose Water Company, San Gabriel Valley Water Company, and Suburban Water Systems as well as all Class-B Water utilities (Fruitridge Vista Water Company, Bakman Water Company, Del Oro Water Company, East Pasadena Water Company, Santa Catalina Island Water (a division of Southern California Edison Company), and Alco Water Service).) shall file a Tier 1 Advice Letter twelve months from a qualifying event, documenting the collaborative engagement they had with the Governor's Office of Emergency Services and the

California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection demonstrating information sharing that aided these entities in carrying out their mission.

A. Collaboration and Information Sharing.

While the Emergency Customer Protections adopted in D.19-07-015 were primarily geared towards wildfire disasters, SJWC interprets the language of Ordering Paragraph 12, in the context of the COVID-19 State of Emergency, to require reporting on its collaboration with State and local emergency services and the information-sharing that has taken place during the pandemic State of Emergency.

From the beginning of the declared State of Emergency, SJWC has participated in meetings organized by Valley Water, our wholesale water supplier, for the purpose of discussing and addressing water utility-related aspects of the pandemic. Those meetings, first held weekly, and now monthly, included all public water systems in Santa Clara County, both local government water systems and Commission-regulated investor-owned water utilities. The meetings have covered various topics and were a collaborative effort to provide information and assistance when and where necessary. The meetings are ongoing.

Through the California Water Association (CWA), SJWC has been kept informed of State government activities pertaining to the COVID-19 State of Emergency as well. The CWA meetings on such topics also are continuing.

SJWC has and continues to stay abreast and informed of Santa Clara County Public Health Department requirements and notices. SJWC is in compliance with all Santa Clara County Public Health Department requirements pertaining to workplace and worker safety, including required postings of workplace safety rules and social distancing protocols.

Compliance with D.19-07-015.

SJWC respectfully submits this Tier 1 Advice Letter in compliance with Ordering Paragraphs 11 and 12 of D.19-07-015.

Effective Date

This advice letter is designated as Tier I compliance filing with no effective date.

Protests and Responses

Anyone may respond to or protest this advice letter. A response does not oppose the filing but presents information that may prove 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 may include the following:

- 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;
- 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 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 address for mailing or delivering a protest is:

Tariff Unit, Water Division, 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 of the protest by mail to us, addressed to:

Regulatory Affairs  
San Jose Water Company  
110 West Taylor Street  
San Jose, CA 95110  
Fax 408.279.7934  
regulatoryaffairs@sjwater.com

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. Public notice is not required.

The present rates of the SJWC became effective on January 1, 2021, by Advice Letter No. 556. SJWC has Advice Letters 557 and 558 pending before the Commission.

In compliance with Paragraph 4.3 of GO 96-B, a copy of this advice letter has been delivered to all interested and affected parties as detailed in Attachment A. In addition, this filing is being served to and filed on the service lists for R.17-06-024 and R.18-03-011. Please note that due to the COVID-19 pandemic, advice letters can only be delivered, served, and filed electronically.

This filing will not cause the withdrawal of service, nor conflict with other schedules or rules.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'John Tang', with a stylized flourish at the end.

JOHN TANG  
Vice President of Regulatory Affairs

Attachment