



April 20, 2021

The Honorable Assembly Member Jordan Cunningham
California State Assembly
State Capitol, Suite #4012
Sacramento, CA 94249

Re: COVID-19 Assistance for Publicly Owned Water and Electric Customers

Dear Assembly Member Cunningham:

On behalf of City of Lompoc, we strongly urge the Legislature to allocate additional and dedicated funding in the amount of at least \$1 billion for past-due public water/wastewater agency and publicly owned electric utility bills, which will provide significant relief for Californians as the state continues to grapple with the economic and personal effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In California, there is a staggering amount of past due utility bills. As of November 2020, the State Water Resources Control Board estimated there is between \$600 and \$700 million in drinking water-related debt, and even more when including wastewater bills. In addition, there is more than \$300 million in unpaid bills to publicly owned electric utilities. These mounting arrearages are negatively impacting communities across the state, and they are continuing to grow.

The City of Lompoc has been significantly affected both in overall revenue loss and past due utility bills. We currently have \$4,970,636 in past due utility accounts. In order to maintain operations, we have issued a moratorium on shutoffs for non-payment, and have also suspended late charges.

There have been several efforts to date to provide utility bill relief to customers, including some funding from federal stimulus bills, but unfortunately these amounts continue to fall short of the overall need for utility debt. Further assistance is needed to help customers with their past-due water, wastewater and electric utility bills. As such, we strongly urge the Legislature to allocate at least \$1 billion in additional and dedicated funding for publicly owned utilities and water/wastewater agencies to work with their customers on arrearages and provide assistance as soon as possible.

If you would like more information about our City or to discuss this further, please contact me at 805-875-8203.

Sincerely,

Jim Throop
City Manager

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cc: The Honorable Gavin Newsom, Governor
The Honorable Toni Atkins, Senate President pro Tempore
The Honorable Anthony Rendon, Speaker of the Assembly
The Honorable Nancy Skinner, Chair, Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Committee
The Honorable Phil Ting, Chair, Assembly Budget Committee
The Honorable Richard Bloom, Chair, Assembly Subcommittee on Climate Crisis,
Resources, Energy, and Transportation
The Honorable Bob Wieckowski, Chair, Senate Budget Subcommittee on Resources,
Environmental Protection and Energy
California Municipal Utilities Association