



# Report on Water Affordability and Shutoff Legislative Initiatives

Communications and Legislation Committee

Item 9-2

March 8, 2020

# Background

- AB 685 (Eng, D-Monterey Park), 2012: Human Right to Water
  - “Every human being has the right to safe, clean, affordable, and accessible water adequate for human consumption, cooking, and sanitary purposes.”
- AB 401 (Dodd, D-Napa), 2015: Low-Income Water Rate Assistance (LIRA) Program
  - Recommendations to the legislature in 2020
    - Income and bottled water tax as potential revenue source
    - Distribution of benefits

# Background

- SB 200 (Monning, D-Carmel), 2019: Drinking Water
  - Established the Safe and Affordable Drinking Water Fund
  - \$130 million annually (until 2030)
  - Operations & Maintenance costs
  - Consolidation costs
  - Replacement water

# Background

- Senate Bill 998 (Dodd, D-Napa), 2018: Discontinuation of residential water service: urban and community water systems
  - New shutoff requirements and restrictions for vulnerable populations
  - Mandated written policy
  - Alternative payment methods
- Governor's Executive Order N-42-20 (April 2020)
  - Restricting water service shutoffs

# Background

- State Water Resources Control Board COVID-19 Financial Impact Survey (January 2021)
  - Drinking water debt nearly \$600 million
  - 12% of California households affected
  - Average per household drinking water debt at \$300

# Proposed Legislation

- SB 222 (Dodd, D-Napa), 2021: Water Affordability Assistance Program
- SB 223 (Dodd, D- Napa), 2021: Discontinuation of residential water service



# SB 222: Water Affordability Assistance Program

- Provide assistance for drinking and wastewater services
  - Direct water bill assistance/credits
  - Water crisis assistance
  - Affordability assistance
  - Water efficiency measures
  - Short-term assistance to public water systems
- Investor- and publicly-owned utilities are required to share low-income customer data

# SB 223: Discontinuation of residential water service

- Extends the requirements established by SB 998 (Dodd, D-Napa), 2018
  - Arrearage management plans/debt forgiveness
  - Restricts disconnections:
    - Until 120 days and if debt is more than \$400
    - Master meter multi-family or mobile home park
  - Requires California Public Utilities Commission to share low-income customer data



# Key Issues

- SB 222

- Significant funding need with unidentified source
- Lack of efficient benefit distribution mechanism
- Preference for individual agency program

- SB 223

- Implementation of SB 998 and Governor's EO
- May conflict with Proposition 218
- Potential economic impacts on member agencies

# Next Steps

- Continue to monitor negotiations on SB 222 and SB 223
- Report back to the Board, as needed

