May 19, 2020

The Honorable City Council
Office of the City Clerk
Room 395, City Hall
Mail Stop 160

Attention: Councilmember Nury Martinez
Chairperson, Energy, Climate Change & Environmental Justice Committee

Honorable Members:

Subject: Council File No. 20-0483 – Project Share Program / Utility Service Bill / Economic Hardship / Ratepayer Donations

This is in response to the subject referenced motion (Blumenfield-Rodriguez) requesting the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP) report to the Council in 15 days on the feasibility of implementing a Project Share Program modeled after the City of Burbank’s Program; and that contains a line item on the bill that facilitates donations to the Program to support ratepayers facing economic hardship.

LADWP has a long history of providing financial assistance to income-qualified customers to help them pay their utility bills. From 1983–2015, LADWP had a program called Project Angel, which collected charitable donations from customers through a check box on the LADWP bill which indicated that a donation was included with the bill payment. On April 17, 2020, the Board of Water and Power Commissioners established the Los Angeles Utility Bill Assistance Fund.

The Los Angeles Utility Bill Assistance Fund will continue to be administered by the United Way and funds can be distributed throughout the year, depending on availability, to income-qualified, disabled, and senior customers who meet certain criteria established by LADWP.

With the implementation of Customer Care and Billing (CCB), LADWP lost the revenue funding source from customer donations on their LADWP bill. In order to implement a method for customers to donate directly to the Los Angeles Utility Bill Assistance Fund,
LADWP’s Information Technology Services organization would need to configure CCB to accept such donations. LADWP has begun discussion for this functionality to be added, most likely following the upgrade of the CCB system.

The City of Burbank has a program known as Project Share. Customers can donate to the program by writing a check to Project Share, filling out a paper form to make a one-time or monthly donation that shows up on the customer’s bill, or enrolling in the Round Up Program, where Burbank rounds the customer’s bill up to the nearest dollar, and the donates the difference to Project Share.

If you have any questions or if further information is required, please call me at (213) 367-1338, or have your staff contact Ms. Winifred Yancy, Director, Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs, at (213) 367-0025.

Sincerely,

Martin L. Adams
General Manager and Chief Engineer