

MOTION

The COVID 19 Pandemic has put enormous strain on working families in Los Angeles. As of November 2020, residential customers of the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP) had over \$469 million in arrearages for water, power, and sewage bills. This debt is carried by 526,012 people with an average of \$891.68 per customer and 113,144 people having more than \$1,000 in arrearages. This debt is overwhelmingly concentrated in low-income communities of color such as the Northeast San Fernando Valley and South LA.

Everyday people across the city continue to fall further behind on their utility bills. However, because of existing laws, LADWP is limited in how they can handle this debt. Propositions 218 and 26 restrict the agency from using its own funds to subsidize customers and the Charter prevents mass debt relief or writing off debt.

For this reason it is imperative for LADWP to receive funding to provide utility debt relief for low-income customers. In 2020, the City Council authorized \$50 million in CARES funding for utility debt relief. Since then, new federal funds have been made available to the City through the American Rescue Plan. Governor Gavin Newsom has also proposed \$2 billion in funding to address utility debt.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the Chief Legislative Analyst and the City Administrative Officer work with LADWP to determine and report back in 10 days on the appropriate amount of money the City can provide the agency for the purposes of utility debt relief.

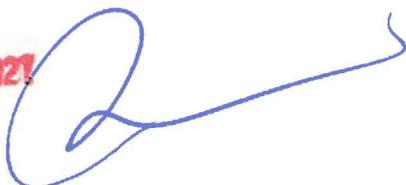
I FURTHER MOVE that LADWP report back in 20 days on a plan to distribute these funds via an equitable distribution mechanism that eliminates any barriers for low-income households and promotes long-term affordability. LADWP should then report back to the City Council in the future on the effectiveness of this allocation.

I FURTHER MOVE that the City of Los Angeles and LADWP publicly support a \$2 billion allocation in the state budget for unpaid water and power utility bills and call on the state to provide these funds to the City for these purposes.

I FURTHER MOVE that LADWP waive all late fees and penalties and extend the shutoff moratorium through the end of the year.

I FURTHER MOVE that LADWP implement long-term affordability strategies such as bill stabilization programs, streamlined enrollment for discount and energy savings programs, and arrearage management programs.

MAY 19 2021



PRESENTED BY: *Nufy Martinez*
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Councilwoman, 6th District

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