

**PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION**

City and County of San Francisco

RESOLUTION NO.: 22-0110

WHEREAS, On February 25, 2020, the Mayor declared San Francisco to be in a local state of emergency due to the threat of a novel (new) coronavirus (COVID-19), posing serious health threats to the population. On March 4, 2020, Governor Gavin Newsom declared a state of emergency for all of California to protect against the threat of COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, On March 13, 2020, the Mayor mandated that the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC) suspend shutoffs of water and power service due to late or non-payments and the issuance of associated late penalties and fees; and

WHEREAS, On March 16, 2020, the City's Health Officer issued an order (Health Officer Order No. C19-07) requiring all San Francisco residents to shelter-in-place. Residents were forced to stay at home, resulting in the closure of all nonessential businesses. This order, which was extended through May 31, 2020, put significant economic strain on San Francisco residents; and

WHEREAS, On February 22, 2022, the SFPUC extended the suspension of shutoffs on water and power service due to late or non-payment and the issuance of associated late penalties and fees through July 1, 2022 for commercial customers, August 1, 2022 for residential non-Customer Assistance Program (CAP) enrollees, and September 1, 2022 for residential CAP enrollees through adopting Resolution 22-0043; and

WHEREAS, COVID-19 has and continues to harm the local and state economies due to job loss, business closure, wage decreases, and other negative economic impacts. These challenges have made it more and more challenging for customers to afford utility bills; and

WHEREAS, As customers struggle to afford utility bills due to this economic hardship cause by COVID-19, there has been a rise in the numbers of total arrearages across all customer types, burdening customers with the financial strain of piling bills and resulting in loss of revenues for the SFPUC; and

WHEREAS, On July 13, 2021, as part of the Fiscal Year 2021-22 State Budget Act (SB 129), \$985 million was appropriated from the Coronavirus Fiscal Recovery Fund, established by the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, to the State of California Water Resources Control Board for payments to community water systems and \$1 billion was appropriated from the same Fund to the State of California Department of Community Services to electric utilities to forgive residential and commercial customers arrearages that accrued during the COVID-19 pandemic relief bill period (March 4, 2020 through June 15, 2021); and

WHEREAS, On July 16, 2021, as part of Assembly Bill 135, the requirements of the California Arrearage Payment Program were established, and on July 23, 2021, as part of Assembly Bill 148, the requirements of the California Water Wastewater Arrearages Program were established; and

WHEREAS, SFPUC submitted an application to the State in April of 2022 with information on eligible residential and commercial wastewater arrearages; and

WHEREAS, In April 2022, the SFPUC received notice it will receive the full amount requested to cover eligible customer wastewater arrearages and bill discounts from the State; and


WHEREAS, On May 23, 2022, the SFPUC received wastewater funds with a 60-day window in which the SFPUC must disperse the funds to customers; and

WHEREAS, In early June 2022, the SFPUC disbursed all funds to ensure adherence to State program guidelines and the prompt issuance of much needed debt relief to customers; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Commission hereby authorizes the retroactive accept and expend of an amount up to \$9,302,044 in funds from the Coronavirus Fiscal Recovery Fund, established by the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, to cover the arrearages for eligible SFPUC wastewater residential and commercial customers accumulated between March 4, 2020 and June 15, 2021, and discounts applied to wastewater customer bills during the same time period as well as program administration costs; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That this Commission hereby authorizes the General Manager or his designee, to seek approval from the Board of Supervisors to accept and expend the grant and execute the grant agreement and other documents, which may be necessary for securing and administering the grant.

*I hereby certify that the foregoing was adopted by the Public Utilities Commission at its meeting of June 14, 2022.*



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Secretary, Public Utilities Commission