

1 [Urging Forgiveness of California’s Utility Debt and Extension of the Utility Shut-Off  
Moratorium]

2

3 **Resolution urging Governor Gavin Newsom and the California Public Utilities**  
4 **Commission to extend the utility shut-off moratorium past June 30, 2021, and forgive**  
5 **utility debt beginning March 2020.**

6

7 WHEREAS, Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020 nearly 47% of  
8 the California workforce has filed for unemployment insurance benefits and as of mid-  
9 February 2021, close to 1 in 5 workers in the state have claimed long-term unemployment,  
10 meaning they have collected unemployment insurance for over 26 weeks; and

11 WHEREAS, Residential customers of the four major California investor-owned energy  
12 utility (IOU) under the jurisdiction of the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) entered  
13 the pandemic with \$500 million in gas and electric utility debt, and that debt has now  
14 increased by over \$650 million to a total of over \$1 billion in December 2020, and  
15 approximately \$324 million of the increase is owed by California Alternate Rates for Energy  
16 (CARE) or Family Electric Rate Assistance Program (FERA) customers; and

17 WHEREAS, The City and County of San Francisco and its San Francisco Public  
18 Utilities Commission (SFPUC) have been leaders in providing support to utility customers,  
19 including suspending shutoffs prior to the state mandate, implementing residential and  
20 commercial emergency COVID discount programs, participating in national convenings, and  
21 leading legislative efforts to secure funding; and

22 WHEREAS, The SFPUC suspended the return of delinquent CleanPowerSF  
23 Customers to PG&E generation service for failure to pay CleanPowerSF charges and  
24 implemented a one-time \$2.8 million customer assistance bill credit for low-income customers;  
25 and

1           WHEREAS, On April 27, 2021, the SFPUC will consider extension of the emergency  
2 customer assistance programs and rule changes described above, through March 2022; and

3           WHEREAS, The CPUC approved a utility shut off moratorium in March 2020 following  
4 the March 4, 2020 State of Emergency declaration by Governor Gavin Newsom until  
5 April 16, 2021; and

6           WHEREAS, Following a CPUC presentation at the COVID Impacts on Energy  
7 Customers Workshop in November 2020 that showed a dramatic increase in unpaid  
8 residential bills, on February 11, 2021, the CPUC approved to extend the moratorium until  
9 June 30, 2021; and

10           WHEREAS, As of March 29, 2021, CleanPowerSF's residential customer bill  
11 delinquency more than 60 days overdue was \$2,739,333 with highest percentage of  
12 delinquent customer accounts being in Districts 10 and 6, two districts with the highest poverty  
13 rates in San Francisco which have also been historically impacted by environmental harms  
14 including power generation and suffered from a lack of access to affordable and reliable  
15 energy; and

16           WHEREAS, Prior to shelter-in-place for COVID, 10% of active CleanPower SF  
17 customer accounts were enrolled in CARE, and as of October 1, 2020, 13.4% of all  
18 CleanPowerSF customers are enrolled in CARE or FERA, a 34% increase in the number of  
19 program participants since March 2020; and

20           WHEREAS, Senate Bill 598 (Hueso 2017) required CPUC to develop measures to  
21 reduce electric and gas disconnection rates by January 1, 2021, and in Decision 20-06-003,  
22 the CPUC adopted the Arrearage Management Program (AMP) which will relieve a qualifying  
23 customer's past debt of up to \$8,000 over a 12 month time period in exchange for paying  
24 current bills on time and in full; and

1           WHEREAS, A November 2020 report by the San Francisco Local Agency Formation  
2 Commission, titled “Power is a Right: Preventing a Disconnection Crisis in San Francisco  
3 During and After COVID-19” by Coro Fellow Adiba Khan, concluded that the CPUC’s decision  
4 is insufficient to prevent utility debt accumulation during the moratorium, and prevent  
5 disconnection after the moratorium ends; and

6           WHEREAS, On April 5, 2021, several advocacy groups including The Utility Reform  
7 Network (TURN) asked Governor Gavin Newsom to protect utility ratepayers by allocating \$2  
8 billion of Federal COVID Emergency Funds or State surplus funds to utility customer debt  
9 relief; now, therefore, be it

10           RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors of the City and County of San Francisco  
11 urges Governor Newsom and the CPUC to extend the power shut-off moratorium and provide  
12 utility debt relief to residential and small commercial customers that prioritizes those most in  
13 need; and, be it

14           FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors of the City and County of San  
15 Francisco urges the office of Governor Newsom and the CPUC to advocate for the  
16 development of funding sources and/or provide funding sources to support utility rate payer  
17 relief programs; and, be it

18           FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors of the City and County of San  
19 Francisco urges the SFPUC to continue to explore debt relief for its customers in preparation  
20 that the Governor and CPUC do not take action, or in the event their action falls short of  
21 providing the appropriate amount of relief; and, be it

22           FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors of the City and County of San  
23 Francisco hereby directs the Clerk of the Board to transmit a copy of this Resolution to the  
24 office of Governor Newsom and the CPUC.

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