

# PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

City and County of San Francisco

RESOLUTION NO. 24-0049

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 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 a stay safe at home order, Health Officer Order No. C19-07 (the Stay Safe At Home Order), requiring most people to remain in their homes subject to certain exceptions including obtaining essential goods such as food and necessary supplies, and requiring the closure of nonessential businesses; and

WHEREAS, On June 15, 2021, Governor Gavin Newsom signed Executive Orders N-07-21 and N-08-21 rescinding the Stay At Home Order and implementing the Blueprint for a Safer Economy; and

WHEREAS, On September 13, 2022, by Resolution No. 22-0157, this Commission extended the suspension of shutoffs on water and wastewater service due to late or non-payment and the issuance of associated late penalties and fees through June 30, 2023 for residential retail customers; and

WHEREAS, COVID-19 has and continues to harm the local and state economies due to job loss, business closures, 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, As part of the Fiscal Year 2021-22 State Budget Act, \$985 million was appropriated from the State General Fund to the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB), and shortly thereafter the SWRCB created the California Water and Wastewater Arrearage Payment Program (CWWAPP) to distribute those funds to water systems and wastewater treatment providers 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, In June 2022, The SFPUC received and distributed \$7.3 million for Water and \$9.3 million for Wastewater residential and commercial customers in need of arrearage relief pursuant to the 2021 CWWAPP program; and

WHEREAS, On July 10, 2023, Governor Newsom signed Senate Bill No. 122 expanding the CWWAPP (Extended CWWAPP) to extend the COVID Relief Period to December 31, 2022, with the state legislature allocating the remaining \$600 million in federal funding for this program; and

WHEREAS, On October 3, 2023, as part of Board Resolution No. 2023-0038, the SWRCB adopted guidelines of the Extended CWWAPP; and

WHEREAS, In December 2023, the SFPUC submitted an application for the Extended CWWAPP, with additional data on eligible customers and ongoing arrearages; and


WHEREAS, The SFPUC applied for and expects to receive eligible funds in the amount of \$23,368,920.23 under the Extended CWWAPP for Water and Wastewater residential and commercial customer arrearages; and

WHEREAS, The SFPUC must disperse the Extended CWWAPP funds within 60 days of receipt to the eligible SFPUC customers under the program; and

WHEREAS, This action does not constitute a “project” under the California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines section 15378(a) because there would be no physical change in the environment; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Commission hereby authorizes the SFPUC to accept and expend of up to \$23,368,920.23 in Extended CWWAPP funds to cover the arrearages for eligible Water and Wastewater residential and commercial customers accumulated between June 16, 2021 and December 31, 2022, subject to approval by the San Francisco Board of Supervisors under Administrative Code section 10.170-1(b).

*I hereby certify that the foregoing was adopted by the Public Utilities Commission at its meeting of February 27, 2024.*

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Plonna Hood". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style. Below the signature is a horizontal line.

Secretary, Public Utilities Commission