



Agenda Report

January 17, 2025

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council

FROM: Water and Power Department

SUBJECT: AUTHORIZE THE GENERAL MANAGER OF THE WATER AND POWER DEPARTMENT TO PAUSE OR SUSPEND THE UTILITY BILLING PROCESS AS A RESPONSE TO THE 2025 EATON WILDFIRE DISASTER

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council:

1. Find that the action proposed herein is not a “project” subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 21065 and within the meaning of Section 15378(b); and
2. Authorize the General Manager (or designee) of the Water and Power Department to temporarily:
 - a. Pause the billing process for water and electric services for customers whose account was closed due to the loss of their home or business in the 2025 Eaton Wildfire Disaster;
 - b. Suspend collection of late fees for up to 60 days for customers who were displaced during a mandatory evacuation caused by the 2025 Eaton Wildfire Disaster; and
 - c. Suspend service interruptions due to non-payment for up to 60 days for customers who were displaced during a mandatory evacuation caused by the 2025 Eaton Wildfire Disaster

BACKGROUND:

The Water and Power Department (“PWP”) provides water to a population of more than 165,000 people in Pasadena, and portions of Altadena and San Gabriel and electricity to a service area that holds nearly 140,000 people. Water services are provided through approximately 38,000 metered connections and electricity is delivered to over 67,000 connections within the city of Pasadena.

On January 7, 2025, Pasadena and Altadena experienced a windstorm and subsequent fires that brought devastating and wide-spread destruction across the region. As the fierce

winds fueled the fast-moving Eaton wildfire, entire neighborhoods were threatened, leaving many residents and businesses facing severe damage and displacement.

In the wake of the Eaton wildfire disaster, PWP understands the significant impact it has on customers and their communities. Homes were damaged or destroyed, businesses were disrupted, and many individuals are facing unexpected financial burdens. The physical, emotional, and economic toll of such an event can be overwhelming, and PWP recognizes that many customers are experiencing challenging circumstances as they begin the long process of recovery.

As a utility, PWP is committed to supporting customers during this difficult time by offering assistance and flexibility with their accounts. As a result, customers whose accounts are closed due to the loss of their homes or business, PWP recommends temporarily pausing the billing process for utility services. For customers displaced during mandatory evacuations, PWP will temporarily suspend collection of late fees and service interruptions due to non-payment for up to sixty days.

This measure provides critical relief to affected individuals and businesses by allowing them time to stabilize their situations without the added pressure of utility bills accumulating or facing the threat of service disconnection. By suspending these processes, PWP is ensuring that recovery efforts are prioritized, while also maintaining public health and safety by keeping essential services operational during the recovery phase.

COUNCIL POLICY CONSIDERATION:

The recommendations to authorize the General Manager to adjust water and electric utility billing supports the City Council's goals to maintain fiscal responsibility and stability, and improve the quality of life and the local economy in Pasadena by enhancing customer satisfaction and confidence during disaster recovery efforts.

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

CEQA excludes, from environmental review, actions that are not "projects" as defined by CEQA Guidelines Section 21065 and within the meaning of Section 15378(b). Sections 21065 and 15378(b) define a project as an action which may cause either a direct physical change in the environment, or a reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment. Section 15378 excludes from the definition of "project" administrative activities of governments that will not result in direct or indirect physical changes in the environment. The actions proposed herein, authorizing the temporary pause of billing and suspending collections and interruptions due to the 2025 Eaton Wildfire Disaster, is an administrative activity, and therefore is not a "project" as defined by CEQA. Since the action is not a project subject to CEQA, no environmental document is required.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The fiscal impact of this action to the General Fund is estimated to be less than \$100,000 for the suspension of late fees for 60 days. The City will pursue reimbursement from the Federal Emergency Management Agency for any losses associated with the Eaton wildfire disaster.

Respectfully submitted,



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Approved by:



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