

Policy on Discontinuation of Residential Water Service for Nonpayment Effective February 1, 2020

Introduction/Background

On September 28, 2018, Senate Bill (SB) 998, the Water Protection Shutoff Act, was signed into law. The Water Protection Shutoff Act modified public and community water system practices regarding the discontinuation for residential water service for nonpayment. The purpose of the Water Protection Shutoff Act is to provide additional customer protections to ensure access to safe and clean drinking water in accordance with the Human Right to Water Act.¹ Among other things, the Water Protection Shutoff Act requires water systems to have a written policy on discontinuation of residential water service for nonpayment. The policy shall include:²

1. A plan for deferred or reduced payments;
2. Alternative payment schedules;
3. A formal mechanism for a customer to contest or appeal a bill; and
4. A telephone number for a customer to contact to discuss options for averting discontinuation of residential service for nonpayment.

This document discusses SCE's policies on the discontinuation of water service for nonpayment in accordance with the Water Protection Shutoff Act.

Policy Details

Deferred or Reduced Payment Plans and Alternative Payment Schedules

Bills for water service to SCE customers are issued monthly and are considered delinquent if not paid within 19 days. Customers unable to pay the costs of water service during the normal billing period may request a deferred or reduced payment plan or alternative payment schedule to avoid the discontinuation of water service. SCE offers multiple financial and billing assistance programs to help customers meet their utility service obligations. These programs include low-income ratepayer assistance, Budget Billing Plan, and one-time bill assistance. Service will not be discontinued for nonpayment if the customer complies with the terms of a deferred or reduced payment plan or alternative payment schedule.

Bill Dispute Procedures

Customers who would like to contest or appeal their bill can do so by either contacting SCE or filing a complaint with California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC). Customers can dispute their bill through SCE's Customer Contact Center by calling (800) 655-4555. If the billing dispute is unable to be resolved directly with SCE, customers may appeal to the CPUC by filing a complaint with the CPUC's Consumer

¹ The Human Right to Water Act (California Water Code § 106.3) states that all Californians have the right to safe, clean, affordable, and accessible water adequate for human consumption, cooking, and sanitary purposes.

² California Water Code § 116906.



Affairs Branch online at www.cpuc.ca.gov/complaints/, by calling 1-800-649-7570 (8:30 AM – 4:30 PM, Monday-Friday), or by mail:

California Public Utilities Commission
Consumer Affairs Branch
505 Van Ness Avenue, 3rd Floor
San Francisco, CA 94102

Additional information on bill dispute procedures is provided in Water Tariff Rule 10 *Disputed Bills*.

Discontinuance and Restoration of Service

If a customer fails to comply with a deferred or reduced payment plan or alternative payment schedule for at least 60 days, service may be disconnected for nonpayment. SCE will contact the customer at least seven days before disconnecting service, informing the customer of the delinquency, and discussing options to prevent the discontinuation of service, including deferred or reduced payment plans and/or alternative payment schedules as discussed above. A final notice of termination will be provided no less than five business days prior to disconnection, advising customers of the conditions required to be met to avoid disconnection of service.

To restore service following discontinuance for nonpayment, the customer may be subject to a reconnection charge. Additional information on service restoration and reconnection charges can be found in Water Tariff Rule 11 *Discontinuance and Restoration of Service*.

Contact Information

Information on SCE's payment, extension, or payment options can be obtained by calling SCE's Customer Contact Center at 1-800-950-2356 or online at www.sce.com/billing.