



For Immediate Release

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Padre Dam resuming late fees and water shutoffs in an effort to protect customers

July 13, 2021 -- Padre Dam Municipal Water District's Board of Directors voted (4-1) to resume billing late fees on utility bills for unpaid past due balances beginning August 1, 2021 after pausing fees during the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, the District will resume water service shutoffs for non-payment beginning on October 1, 2021. The District is returning to pre-pandemic policies set forth in its Rules and Regulations to ensure compliance with California State Laws.

In March 2020, Padre Dam temporarily suspended late fees and water shutoffs for non-payment in an effort to support customers facing financial challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic. In April 2020, Governor Newsom issued an Executive Order (N-42-20) which formally suspended the ability for water systems to discontinue service to residential customers and essential businesses for non-payment. During the June 11, 2021 Press Conference, Governor Newsom announced the expiration of Executive Order N-42-20 as of September 30, 2021 through the newly signed Executive Order N-08-21.

Currently there are approximately 400 Padre Dam accounts with bills that are 60 days or more past due. Over half of the \$528,000 outstanding debt is from 20 accounts -the average past due amount of the remaining accounts is \$630. During normal years, the District typically experiences an average of less than 3 percent debt from late unpaid bills – or approximately \$119,000.

There was discussion about postponing the reinstatement of late fees and shutoffs by a few additional months but ultimately the Board voted in favor of staff's recommendation for the August and October 2021 dates. "We understand there is never a good time to reintroduce late fees and water shutoffs. However, we have an obligation to follow the law and protect the financial security of the community's water system. We maintain as a top priority our commitment to working with customers early in order to avoid shutoff, especially during the holiday months," comments CEO/General Manager Allen Carlisle. The August and October 2021 timeline will allow the District to begin recovering lost revenue from unpaid services without any additional delay or impact to customers who have paid.

Padre Dam worked to support customers throughout the pandemic. The District offered payment plans, worked with customers to pay what they could and encouraged them to seek financial assistance. The District communicated to customers that the shut-off prohibition and suspension of late fees were both

temporary and that the customer is ultimately responsible for paying for the product and services they received. Additionally, Padre Dam promoted the County's Rental Assistance Program to all customers who were facing payments challenges and encouraged them to seek financial assistance. This program helped participating customers pay off water bill debt. Padre Dam will continue to work with customers to help avoid water shutoffs whenever possible.

Padre Dam is a California Special District that provides essential services to our community. In order to provide these services, the District must bill and receive payment from the customers it serves. To ensure that happens and while complying with State law, Padre Dam's Rules and Regulations provide clear steps for addressing overdue bills including applying late fees, penalties and ultimately discontinuation of service for non-payment, liens and collections.

Customers experiencing challenges paying their water and/or wastewater bill are encouraged to contact Customer Service at 619-258-4600 during business hours. The District's Customer Service team will work with customers to reduce delinquent amounts in an effort to avoid shut-off. Additionally, Padre Dam's Customer Service Center will be reopening to the public beginning on Monday, July 19 during normal business hours for customers needing to make a payment in person or speak to a Customer Service Representative.

About Padre Dam

Padre Dam provides water, sewer, recycled water and recreation services to approximately 104,000 residents in East San Diego County including Santee, El Cajon, Lakeside, Flinn Springs, Harbison Canyon, Blossom Valley, Alpine, Dehesa and Crest. The District is a public agency with policies and procedures directed by an elected five-member Board of Directors. The District imports 100% of our treated water supply and treats two million gallons per day (MGD) of wastewater at our Ray Stoyer Water Recycling Facility. Please visit www.padredam.org for more information.

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