EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT
STATE OF CALIFORNIA

EXECUTIVE ORDER N-42-20

WHEREAS on March 4, 2020, I proclaimed a state of emergency to exist in California as a result of the threat of COVID-19; and

WHEREAS it is the established policy of the State under Water Code section 106.3 that every human being has the right to safe, clean, affordable, and accessible water adequate for human consumption, cooking, and sanitary purposes; and

WHEREAS to limit the spread of COVID-19 it is crucial that Californians wash their hands regularly and thoroughly; and

WHEREAS many Californians are experiencing or will experience substantial losses of income as a result of business closures, the loss of work hours or wages, or layoffs related to COVID-19, which may hinder their ability to make payments for water service and subject them to water shutoffs due to non-payment; and

WHEREAS many small businesses that provide services essential to the health and well-being of Californians have experienced substantial reductions in income, which may hinder their ability to make payments for water service and subject them to water shutoffs due to non-payment; and

WHEREAS the California Public Utilities Commission has directed private water utilities under its jurisdiction to implement customer service protections, including a moratorium on service disconnections, during the COVID-19 emergency; and

WHEREAS more than 100 public and private water systems have voluntarily agreed to halt disconnections as well; and

WHEREAS under the provisions of Government Code section 8571, I find that strict compliance with the various statutes and regulations concerning water shutoffs specified in this order would prevent, hinder, or delay appropriate actions to prevent and mitigate the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GAVIN NEWSOM, Governor of the State of California, in accordance with the authority vested in me by the State Constitution and the statutes of the State of California, and in particular, Government Code sections 8567, 8570, 8571, and 8627, do hereby issue the following order to become effective immediately:

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED THAT:

1) The authority of urban and community water systems, as defined in Health and Safety Code section 116902, subdivision (d), to discontinue residential service, as defined in Health and Safety Code section 116902, subdivision (c), for non-payment under Health and Safety Code sections 116908 and 116910, is suspended.

2) Water systems not subject to the requirements of Health and Safety Code sections 116908 and 116910 shall not discontinue residential

service, as defined in Health and Safety Code section 116902, subdivision (c), for non-payment.

3) Water systems shall restore any residential service to occupied residences that has been discontinued for nonpayment since March 4, 2020.

4) Water systems shall not discontinue service to any business in the critical infrastructure sectors designated by the State Public Health Officer as critical to protect the health and well-being of all Californians that qualifies as a small business under 13 C.F.R. § 121.201 of the Small Business Administration's regulations.

5) The State Water Resources Control Board shall identify best practices, guidelines, or both to be implemented during the COVID-19 emergency (i) to address non-payment or reduced payments, (ii) to promote and to ensure continuity of service by water systems and wastewater systems, and (iii) to provide measures such as the sharing of supplies, equipment and staffing to relieve water systems under financial distress.

Nothing in this Order eliminates the obligation of water customers to pay for water service, prevents a water system from charging a customer for such service, or reduces the amount a customer already may owe to a water system.

Nothing in this Order modifies the obligations of urban and community waters systems to comply with provisions of the Water Shutoff Protection Act not specifically addressed by this Order or other applicable laws, regulations, and guidelines.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that as soon as hereafter possible, this Order be filed in the Office of the Secretary of State and that widespread publicity and notice be given of this Order.

This Order is not intended to, and does not, create any rights or benefits, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or in equity, against the State of California, its agencies, departments, entities, officers, employees, or any other person.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of California to be affixed this 2nd day of April 2020.

GAVIN NEWSOM
Governor of California

ATTEST:

ALEX PADILLA
Secretary of State