

PROPOSED PUBLIC UTILITIES DEPARTMENT AMENDMENTS

POSITION: The Chamber's Energy & Water Committee voted to SUPPORT this proposal on August 2, 2018. The Chamber's Public Policy Committee voted to SUPPORT this proposal on August 14, 2018.

RATIONALE: The Chamber's Energy & Water Committee voted to SUPPORT this proposal as water is vital to every business and resident in the City and these proposed amendments will work toward ensuring an overall improved PUD customer experience.

STATUS: San Diego City Councilmember Chris Cate issued a memo outlining the proposed amendments to the Public Utilities Department on May 21, 2018. The proposed amendments were unanimously supported by the City of San Diego's Environment Committee on August 2, 2018 and forwarded to the full City Council for consideration.

SUMMARY

The proposed Public Utilities Department (PUD) Amendments would require that PUD be included in the City of San Diego's Five-Year Financial Outlook and require PUD to notify customers in writing when their water meter is estimated.

INDUSTRY/IES IMPACTED

The industries that could be directly impacted are: utilities, infrastructure, communications, and more.

SUPPORTERS

- Councilmember Chris Cate
- City of San Diego PUD Director
- City of San Diego Environment Committee

OPPONENTS

None known

ARGUMENTS IN FAVOR

Hundreds of residents in the City of San Diego saw their water bill skyrocket this year for no apparent reason and many were met with other than ideal customer service from PUD. The two proposed PUD amendments represent a necessary step forward in correcting an internal problem. It is important that PUD's finances be reviewed annually like other departments in the City of San Diego. Likely, it is critical that PUD provide a written notice to every customer when their water meter is estimated to ensure proper oversight and transparency.

ARGUMENTS IN OPPOSITION

Requiring written notice to each and every customer when their meter has been estimated will be a waste of staff hours and paper. With rising minimum wage costs, this adds another financial burden to the City. In addition, City of San Diego and taxpayer funds will have to be used to pay for paper, printing, and distribution costs to administer the notification program.

MORE INFORMATION

More specifically, the two proposed amendments would:

- Amend a City Council Budget Policy to include PUD in the Five-Year Financial Outlook that projects General Fund revenues and expenditures in preparation for the development of the Annual Budget.
- Amend a Municipal Code to update the water meter reading process to notify customers in writing when their meter has been estimated.

These two proposed amendments are considered noncontroversial and widely supported by numerous councilmembers as well as PUD.