

## PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

505 VAN NESS AVENUE

SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94102-3298



October 21, 2020

Edward N. Jackson  
Director, Rates and Regulatory Affairs  
Liberty Utilities (Park Water) Corp.  
9750 Washburn Road  
Downey, CA 90241

Dear Mr. Jackson,

The Commission has approved Liberty Utilities' (Park Water) Advice Letter No. 302, filed on September 9, 2020, regarding authorization to establish a Polyfluoroalkyl Substances Memorandum Account ("PFASMA").

Enclosed are copies of the following revised tariff sheets, effective October 9, 2020, for the utility's files:

| <b>P.U.C.</b>    |                           |
|------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>Sheet No.</b> | <b>Title of Sheet</b>     |
| 1464-W           | Preliminary Statement, FF |
| 1465-W           | Preliminary Statement, GG |
| 1466-W           | Table of Contents, Page 1 |

Please contact Jefferson Hancock at JHO@cpuc.ca.gov or 415-703-3453, if you have any questions.

Thank you,

/s/ROBIN BRYANT

Robin Bryant  
Water Division

Enclosures

**CALIFORNIA PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION  
DIVISION OF WATER AND AUDITS**

**Advice Letter Cover Sheet**

**Utility Name:** Liberty Utilities (Park Water) Corp.

**Date Mailed to Service List:** September 9, 2020

**District:** N/A

**CPUC Utility #:** U 314-W

**Protest Deadline (20<sup>th</sup> Day):** September 29, 2020

**Advice Letter #:** 302-W

**Review Deadline (30<sup>th</sup> Day):** October 9, 2020

**Tier**    ☐1    ☒2    ☐3    ☒ Compliance

**Requested Effective Date:** October 9, 2020

**Authorization**    Resolution W-5226

**Rate Impact:** N/A

**Description:** Liberty Park Water submits this advice letter to request authorization to establish a Polyfluoroalkyl Substances Memorandum Account ("PFASMA").

The protest or response deadline for this advice letter is 20 days from the date that this advice letter was mailed to the service list. Please see the "Response or Protest" section in the advice letter for more information.

**Utility Contact:** Edward N. Jackson

**Utility Contact:** AnnMarie Lett

**Phone:** 562.923.0711

**Phone:** 562.923.0711

**Email:** [Edward.Jackson@LibertyUtilities.com](mailto:Edward.Jackson@LibertyUtilities.com)

**Email:** [AnnMarie.Lett@libertyutilities.com](mailto:AnnMarie.Lett@libertyutilities.com)

**DWA Contact:** Tariff Unit

**Phone:** (415) 703-1133

**Email:** [Water.Division@cpuc.ca.gov](mailto:Water.Division@cpuc.ca.gov)

**DWA USE ONLY**

**DATE**

**STAFF**

**COMMENTS**

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☐ APPROVED

☐ WITHDRAWN

☐ REJECTED

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Comments:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



Liberty Utilities (Park Water) Corp.  
9750 Washburn Road  
Downey, CA 90241-7002  
Tel: 562-923-0711  
Fax: 562-861-5902

Advice Letter No. 302-W

September 9, 2020

**TO THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA**

Liberty Utilities (Liberty Park Water) Corp. (U 314 W) (“Liberty Park Water”) hereby submits the following revised tariff sheets applicable to water service in its service territory:

| <b>CPUC<br/>Sheet No.</b> | <b>Title of Sheet</b>     | <b>Canceling<br/>Sheet No.</b> |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1464-W                    | Preliminary Statement, FF | 1425-W                         |
| 1465-W                    | Preliminary Statement, GG | ORIGINAL                       |
| 1466-W                    | Table of Contents, Page 1 | 1463-W                         |

**Summary**

The purpose for this advice letter is to request authorization to establish a Polyfluoroalkyl Substance Memorandum Account (“PFASMA”) to track the incremental operating costs related to per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (“PFAS”). The costs related to utility plant and capital expenditures will be requested in a separate application as needed. The purpose of the PFASMA is to record the incremental expenses that are not covered in Liberty Park Water’s revenue requirement, to comply with the regulatory standards set by the State Water Resources Control Board (“SWRCB”), to detect, monitor, report, and remediate PFAS in drinking water.

Pursuant to Industry Rule 8.2 (Request for Similar Treatment) of General Order 96-B, Liberty Park Water is requesting similar treatment afforded to Golden State Water Company (“Golden State”), Suburban Water System (“Suburban”), San Gabriel Water Company (“San Gabriel”), and California Water Service Company (“Cal Water”), together “the Utilities”, in Resolution W-5226 dated August 6, 2020, which granted Golden State, Suburban, San Gabriel, and Cal Water the authority to establish a PFASMA to track the incremental operating costs related to PFAS.

**Background and Discussion**

On July 31, 2019, California Governor Gavin Newsom approved Assembly Bill No. 756 (“AB 756”) that authorizes the SWRCB to order a public water system to monitor for PFAS more broadly. AB 756 was effective January 1, 2020. Under AB 756, if PFAS concentrations above the response level are detected at a given water source, water systems are required to either take that source out of service or notify their customers of the response level exceedance.

On August 23, 2019, the SWRCB announced updated guidelines for local water agencies to follow in detecting and reporting the presence of perfluorooctanoic acid (“PFOA”) and perfluorooctanesulfonic acid (“PFOS”) in drinking water. The SWRCB also announced it has

begun the process of establishing regulatory standards for these chemicals. The updated state guidelines lower the current notification levels from 14 parts per trillion (“ppt”) to 5.1 ppt for PFOA and from 13 ppt to 6.5 ppt for PFOS. Notification levels are a non-regulatory, precautionary health-based measure for concentrations in drinking water that warrant notification and further monitoring and assessment. Public water systems are encouraged to test their water for contaminants with notification levels, and in some circumstances may be ordered to test. If the systems do test, they are required to report exceedances to their governing boards and the SWRCB and are urged to report this information to customers.

In addition to the updated notification levels, the SWRCB has requested the California Environmental Protection Agency Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (“OEHHA”) to develop public health goals (“PHGs”) for PFOA and PFOS, the next step in the process of establishing regulatory standards, known as maximum contaminant levels (“MCLs”), in drinking water. Other chemicals in the broader group of PFAS may be considered later, either individually or grouped, as data permits. Unlike other states, California has not developed its own PHGs at this time.

Currently the SWRCB is conducting a statewide assessment to determine the scope of contamination by PFAS, including PFOA and PFOS, in water systems and groundwater. In the first phase, pursuant to Health and Safety Code Section 116400, public water systems were ordered to sample their drinking water supply wells located near airports and landfills, where contamination is more likely, and near locations where PFAS was previously found. On March 15, 2019, Liberty Park Water was ordered by the SWRCB to sample for PFOA and PFOS in its Bellflower/Norwalk system. This order requires Liberty Park Water to conduct quarterly water analysis for PFOA and PFOS in its Bellflower/Norwalk system. As a result, Liberty Park Water anticipates additional testing requirements of its remaining wells.

On February 6, 2020, the SWRCB has lowered the PFAS response levels for PFOA and PFOS from a combined total of 70 ppt to 10 ppt for PFOA and 40 ppt for PFOS.

On August 6, 2020, the Commission adopted Resolution W-5226 authorizing the Utilities to establish a PFASMA.

Pursuant to Resolution W-5226, Ordering Paragraph 3 states the following:

*Golden State Water Company, Suburban Water Systems, San Gabriel Valley Water Company, and California Water Service Company are authorized to establish memorandum accounts for tracking of incremental operating costs related to per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), but shall file applications to request increases in rate base for incremental plant and capital costs.*

Liberty Park Water therefore requests similar treatment afforded to the Utilities in accordance with Industry Rule 8.2 of General Order 96-B.

A copy of Resolution W-5226 is included as Attachment A to this advice letter for reference.

**Tier Designation**

In accordance with General Order 96-B, Industry Rule 5.2 and Water Industry Rule 7.3.2(7), this advice letter is submitted with a Tier 2 designation.

**Effective Date**

In accordance with General Order 96-B, Industry Rule 5.2 and Water Industry Rule 7.3.2(7), Liberty Park Water requests this filing become effective on October 9, 2020.

**Notice and Service**

In accordance with General Order 96-B, General Rules 4.3 and 7.2, and Water Industry Rule 4.1, a copy of this advice letter will be electronically transmitted on September 9, 2020 to competing and adjacent utilities and other utilities or interested parties having requested such notification. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Liberty Park Water can only provide electronic copies of this advice letter to the service list. Pursuant to Water Industry Rule 3.2 of General Order 96-B, public notice is not required.

**Response or Protest**

Anyone may respond to or protest this advice letter. A response supports the filing and may contain information that proves useful to the Commission in evaluating the advice letter. A protest objects to the advice letter in whole or in part and must set forth the specific grounds on which it is based. These grounds are:

- (1) The utility did not properly serve or give notice of the advice letter;
- (2) The relief requested in the advice letter would violate statute or Commission order or is not authorized by statute or Commission order upon which the utility relies;
- (3) The analysis, calculations, or data in the advice letter contain material error or omissions;
- (4) The relief requested in the advice letter is pending before the Commission in a formal proceeding;
- (5) The relief requested in the advice letter requires consideration in a formal hearing or is otherwise inappropriate for the advice letter process; or
- (6) The relief requested in the advice letter is unjust, unreasonable, or discriminatory, provided that such a protest may not be made where it would require re-litigating a prior order of the Commission.

A protest shall provide citations or proofs where available to allow staff to properly consider the protest. A response or protest must be made in writing or by electronic mail and must be received by the Division of Water within 20 days of the date this advice letter is filed. The address for mailing or delivering a protest is:

Tariff Unit, Water Division, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor  
California Public Utilities Commission  
505 Van Ness Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94102  
[Water.division@cpuc.ca.gov](mailto:Water.division@cpuc.ca.gov)

On the same date the response or protest is submitted to the Water Division, the respondent or protestant shall send a copy by mail (or e-mail) to Liberty Park Water, addressed to:

Edward N. Jackson  
Director, Rates and Regulatory Affairs  
Liberty Utilities (West Region)  
9750 Washburn Road  
P. O. Box 7002  
Downey, CA 90241  
Fax: (562) 861-5902  
E-Mail: [AdviceLetterService@libertyutilities.com](mailto:AdviceLetterService@libertyutilities.com)

Cities and counties that need Board of Supervisors or Board of Commissioners approval to protest should inform the Division of Water and Audits within the 20-day protest period so that a late filed protest can be entertained. The informing document should include an estimate of the date the proposed protest might be voted on.

If you have not received a reply to your protest within 10 business days, contact Edward Jackson at (562) 923-0711.

Very truly yours,

LIBERTY UTILITIES (PARK WATER) CORP.

/s/ Edward N. Jackson

Edward N. Jackson  
Director, Rates and Regulatory Affairs (West Region)  
[Edward.Jackson@libertyutilities.com](mailto:Edward.Jackson@libertyutilities.com)

ENJ/aml

Enclosures

**PRELIMINARY STATEMENT**

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**FF. Catastrophic Event Memorandum Account (“CEMA”)**

2. Procedure

- a. A catastrophic event is defined as a disaster or state of emergency as declared by the appropriate federal or state authorities which includes the Governor of California or the President of the United States.
- b. Should a catastrophic event occur, the Utility will inform the Commission by letter within 30 days after the event that the Utility has started accruing costs in the CEMA. The letter shall be mailed to the Executive Director of the CPUC.
- c. The letter shall specify the date, time and location of the catastrophic event. The letter shall also state which service areas are affected, the impact on the Utility’s facilities, and give an estimate of the extraordinary costs expected to be incurred.
- d. Entries to the CEMA shall be made at the end of each month commencing with the month in which the event occurs. The Utility shall record capital costs and expenses separately.
- e. Monthly interest expense would be calculated at 1/12 of the most recent month’s interest rate on Commercial Paper (non-financial, 3-month), published in the Federal Reserve Statistical Release, [www.federalreserve.gov/releases/H15](http://www.federalreserve.gov/releases/H15), or its successor publication (debit/credit).
- f. The Utility shall not record any capital costs or expenses incurred prior to the start of the declared disaster or state of emergency, as identified by the appropriate authorities.

3. Applicability

The CEMA balance will be recovered from all customer classes, unless specifically requested for exclusion by the Utility.

4. Disposition

Costs recorded in the CEMA may be recovered in rates only after a request by the Utility, a showing of reasonableness, and approval by the Commission. Such a request may be made by formal application specifically for that purpose, by inclusion in a subsequent general rate case, or advice letter request.

**GG. Polyfluoroalkyl Substances Memorandum Account (PFASMA)**

1. Purpose: The purpose of the PFASMA is to record the incremental expenses that are not included in Liberty Park Water’s revenue requirement, to comply with the regulatory standards set by the State Water Control Board, to detect, monitor, and report per-and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) in drinking water.

(N)  
|  
(N)

(Continued)

(To be inserted by utility)

Issued By:

(To be inserted by Cal. P.U.C.)

Advice No. 302-W CHRISTOPHER G. ALARIO  
Name

Date Filed 09/09/2020

Dec. No. PRESIDENT  
Title

Effective 10/09/2020

Resolution No. W-5226

LIBERTY UTILITIES (PARK WATER) CORP.  
9750 WASHBURN ROAD  
P. O. BOX 7002  
DOWNEY, CALIFORNIA 90241-7002

ORIGINAL Cal. P.U.C. Sheet No. 1465-W  
Canceling Cal. P.U.C. Sheet No.

**PRELIMINARY STATEMENT**

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**GG. Polyfluoroalkyl Substances Memorandum Account (PFASMA) (continued) (N)**

2. Applicability

- Liberty Park Water expects to incur costs related to, but not limited to, the following:
- a. Laboratory testing and monitoring – due to the specialized nature of the analyses (new and developing methods, low detection limits and sensitivity for sample Contamination), the cost for each analysis is much greater than routine monitoring tests.
  - b. Customer/public notifications.
  - c. Chemical and operating costs for treatment.
  - d. Special studies related to treatment options.

3. Accounting Procedure

- a. A debit entry shall be made to the PFASMA to record all related costs including, but not limited to, laboratory testing/monitoring, customer/public notifications, chemical costs, and special treatment studies.
- b. Interest shall accrue to the PFASMA on a monthly basis by applying a rate equals to one-twelfth of the 3-month Commercial Paper Rate (non-financial), as reported in the Federal Reserve Statistical Release, [www.federalreserve.gov/releases/H15](http://www.federalreserve.gov/releases/H15), or its successor publication.

4. Effective Date

The PFASMA shall be effective on October 9, 2020.

5. Disposition

Disposition of amounts recorded in the PFASMA shall be determined in Liberty Park Water's next General Rate Case application or as determined by the Commission, if the account's cumulative balance exceeds 2% of Liberty Park Water's adopted gross revenues.

(N)

(To be inserted by utility)

Issued By

(To be inserted by Cal. P.U.C.)

Advice No. 302-W CHRISTOPHER G. ALARIO  
Name

Date Filed 09/09/2020

Dec. No. PRESIDENT  
Title

Effective 10/09/2020

Resolution No. W-5226

## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

The following listed tariff sheets contain all effective rates and rules affecting the charges and service of the utility, together with other pertinent information:

| <b><u>Subject Matter of Sheet:</u></b>    | <b><u>C.P.U.C.<br/>Sheet No.</u></b>  |
|---|---|
| Title Page .....                          | 1407-W  |
| Table of Contents .....                   | 1466-W, 1458-W (T)  |
| Preliminary Statement.....                | 1421-W, 1408-W, 1274-W, 1316-W, 1275-W, 1276-W, 1357-W,<br>1297-W, 1203-W, 1320-W, 1298-W, 1309-W, 1336-W, 1415-W, 1424-W, 1464-W, 1465-W (T) |
| Service Area Map Los Angeles County ..... | 914-W, 499-W through 502-W, 1410-W  |

### **Rate Schedules:**

|                      |   |                       |
|----------------------|---|-----------------------|
| Schedule No. PR-1-R  | Residential Metered Service .....                     | 1417-W, 1427-W        |
| Schedule No. ME-1-R  | General Metered Service .....                         | 1430-W                |
| Schedule No. PR-1-NR | Nonresidential Metered Service.....                   | 1418-W, 1428-W        |
| Schedule No. PR-4F   | Non-Metered Fire Sprinkler Service.....               | 1419-W, 1363-W        |
| Schedule No. PR-5    | Fire Flow Testing Charge .....                        | 1155-W                |
| Schedule No. PR-6    | Reclaimed Water Service.....                          | 1420-W, 1365-W        |
| Schedule No. PR-9CM  | Construction & Other Temporary<br>Meter Service.....  | 1158-W                |
| Schedule No. 14.1    | Water Shortage Contingency Plan.....                  | 1233-W through 1238-W |
| Schedule No. LC      | Late Payment Charge.....                              | 1459-W                |
| Schedule No. UF      | Surcharge to Fund PUC Reimbursement Fee .....         | 1462-W                |
| Schedule No. CARW    | California Alternative Rates for Water .....          | 1366-W, 921-W         |
| Schedule No. CARW-SC | California Alternative Rates for Water Surcharge..... | 1367-W                |

### **LIST OF CONTRACTS AND DEVIATIONS:** 723-W

#### **Rules:**

|        |  |                                |
|--------|--|--------------------------------|
| No. 1  | Definitions .....                                  | 1432-W, 1433-W                 |
| No. 2  | Description of Service.....                        | 400-W                          |
| No. 3  | Application for Service .....                      | 345-W, 916-W                   |
| No. 4  | Contracts .....                                    | 346-W                          |
| No. 5  | Special Information Required on Forms .....        | 1453-W, 1454-W, 1434-W, 1435-W |
| No. 6  | Establishment and Re-establishment of Credit ..... | 347-W                          |
| No. 7  | Deposits.....                                      | 1014-W, 1161-W                 |
| No. 8  | Notices .....                                      | 1436-W through 1439-W          |
| No. 9  | Rendering and Payment of Bills .....               | 1097-W through 1100-W          |
| No. 10 | Disputed Bills.....                                | 1440-W, 1441-W                 |
| No. 11 | Discontinuance and Restoration of Service .....    | 1460-W, 1443-W through 1452-W  |
| No. 12 | Information Available to Public.....               | 353-W, 354-W                   |
| No. 13 | Temporary Service .....                            | 355-W, 356-W                   |

(Continued)

**Attachment A**  
**Resolution W-5226**

**DATE OF ISSUANCE: 08/13/2020**

**PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA**

**WATER DIVISION**

**RESOLUTION W-5226**

**August 6, 2020**

**RESOLUTION**

**(RES. W-5226) GOLDEN STATE WATER COMPANY, SUBURBAN WATER SYSTEMS, SAN GABRIEL VALLEY WATER COMPANY, AND CALIFORNIA WATER SERVICE COMPANY. THIS RESOLUTION REVERSES WATER DIVISION'S REJECTION OF GOLDEN STATE WATER COMPANY'S, SUBURBAN WATER SYSTEMS', AND SAN GABRIEL VALLEY WATER COMPANY'S REQUESTS AND GRANTS THE REQUEST OF CALIFORNIA WATER SERVICE COMPANY TO ESTABLISH MEMORANDUM ACCOUNTS FOR COSTS RELATED TO POLYFLUOROALKYL SUBSTANCES.**

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**By Golden State Water Company's Advice Letter 1795-W-A, Suburban Water System's Advice Letter 343-W-A, San Gabriel Valley Water Company's Advice Letter 545-W, and California Water Service Company's Advice Letter 2376; filed on October 31, 2019, December 6, 2019, January 7, 2020, and March 4, 2020, respectively.**

**SUMMARY**

This Resolution responds to requests by Golden State Water Company (Golden State), Suburban Water Systems (Suburban) and San Gabriel Valley Water Company (San Gabriel), collectively "the Utilities", for review of Water Division's rejection of Golden State's Advice Letter No. 1795-W-A, Suburban's Advice Letter No. 343-W-A, and San Gabriel's Advice Letter No. 545-W, each of which requested the establishment of a Polyfluoroalkyl Substance Memorandum Account (PFASMA). This Resolution reverses Water Division's disposition rejection of Advice Letters 1795-W-A, 343-W-A, and 545-W. In addition, this Resolution grants the request of California Water Service Company

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(Cal Water) in Advice Letter 2376 to establish a PFASMA that is currently pending with Water Division.

## **BACKGROUND**

Golden State Water Company (Golden State), Suburban Water Systems (Suburban), San Gabriel Valley Water Company (San Gabriel), and California Water Service Company (Cal Water) each requested to establish a Polyfluoroalkyl Substance Memorandum Account (PFASMA) to recover costs they expect to incur including:

- Laboratory testing and monitoring – due to the specialized nature of the analyses (new and developing methods, low detection limits and sensitivity for sample contamination) the cost for each analysis is much greater than routine monitoring tests.
- Customer/public notifications
- Alternative sources of supply
- Chemical and operating costs for treatment
- Special studies related to treatment options, engineering design, and distribution system hydraulic modeling
- Incremental plant investment for treatment facilities to remove PFAS, including potential Granular Activated Carbon (GAC) and/or Ion Exchange treatment processes

### **Polyfluoroalkyl Substances**

On August 23, 2019, the California State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) announced updated guidelines for local water agencies to follow in detecting and reporting the presence of perfluorooctanoic (“PFOA”) and perfluorooctanesulfonic acid (“PFOS”) in drinking water.<sup>1</sup> The SWRCB also announced it has begun the process of establishing regulatory standards for these chemicals. The updated state guidelines lower the current notification levels from 14 parts per trillion (“ppt”) to 5.1 ppt for PFOA and from 13 ppt to 6.5 ppt for PFOS. Notification levels are a precautionary health-based measure for concentrations in drinking water that warrant notification and further monitoring and assessment. Public water systems are encouraged to test their water for contaminants with notification levels, and in some circumstances may be ordered to test. If the systems do test, they are required to report exceedances to their

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<sup>1</sup> State Water Board Media Release, August 23, 2019:

[https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/press\\_room/press\\_releases/2019/pr082319\\_pfoa\\_pfos\\_guidelines\\_news\\_release.pdf](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/press_room/press_releases/2019/pr082319_pfoa_pfos_guidelines_news_release.pdf)

governing boards and the SWRCB and are urged, but not required, to report this information to customers.

On July 31, 2019, California Governor Gavin Newsom approved Assembly Bill No. 756 (“AB 756”) which authorizes the SWRCB to order a public water system to monitor for PFAS more broadly. AB756 took effect on January 1, 2020. Under AB 756, if PFAS concentrations above the response level are detected at a given water source, water systems are required to either take that source out of service or notify their customers of the response level exceedance. A response level is set higher than a notification level and represents a recommended chemical concentration level at which water systems consider taking a water source out of service or provide treatment. On February 6, 2020, the SWRCB lowered the response levels to 10 ppt for PFOA and 40 ppt for PFOS, down from a combined 70 ppt for both chemicals.

In addition to the updated notification and response levels, the SWRCB has requested that the California Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (“OEHHHA”) develop public health goals (“PHGs”) for both PFOA and PFOS, the next step in the process of establishing regulatory standards, known as maximum contaminant levels (MCLs), in drinking water. Other chemicals in the broader group of PFAS may be considered later, either individually or grouped, as data permits. Unlike other states, California has not developed its own MCLs at this time.<sup>2</sup>

The SWRCB is currently conducting a statewide assessment to determine the scope of contamination by PFAS, including PFOA and PFOS, in water systems and groundwater. In the first phase, pursuant to Health and Safety Code section 116400, in March 2019 public water systems were ordered to sample (quarterly for one year) about 600 drinking water supply wells located near airports and landfills, where contamination is more likely, and near locations where PFAS was previously found under the federal Environmental Protection Agency’s Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule 3. Following this initial phase, the assessment will likely focus on sampling water sources near industrial sites and at wastewater treatment facilities. Currently, there are only a few labs in California that are accredited for analysis of PFAS which causes public water systems to pay for a rushing fee to meet the criteria directed in the order from the SWRCB.

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<sup>2</sup> New Jersey was the first state to establish regulatory standards for PFAS, with an MCL of 14 ppt for PFOA in 2017 and an MCL 13 ppt for PFOS following. Colorado, Connecticut, Michigan, and Rhode Island have established regulatory standards of 70 ppt for the combined concentrations of several PFAS chemicals. More information can be found through the Interstate Technology Regulatory Council at <https://pfas-1.itrcweb.org/fact-sheets/>.

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**Golden State Water Company**

On March 15, 2019, the SWRCB ordered Golden State to begin collecting PFOA and PFOS samples on 19 of its 235 wells as part of the Phase 1 initiative, pursuant to Health and Safety Code section 116400 (quarterly for one year). Golden State determined that Imperial Well #2 in the Norwalk District, contained PFOS levels that exceeded the response level and in July 2019, the well was taken offline. As a result of exceeding the response levels, notification letters were sent to the SWRCB, California Public Utilities Commission, and customers on August 21, 2019.

On October 31, 2019, Golden State submitted Advice Letter (AL) 1795-W requesting to establish a PFASMA to recover the costs for collecting and submitting samples to specialized testing facilities, customer/public notifications, chemical and operating costs for treatment, and special studies related to treatment options.

On November 18, 2019, the Public Advocates Office (Cal PA) requested to extend the protest deadline from November 20<sup>th</sup> to December 4<sup>th</sup>. Water Division granted the extension and Cal PA did not file a protest. On December 5<sup>th</sup>, a supplemental advice letter, AL 1795-W-A was submitted to Water Division, which included updates discussed between Cal PA and Golden State. Water Division rejected Golden State's AL 1795-W-A by disposition letter pursuant to General Order 96-B, General Rule 7.6.1 and Water Industry Rule 7.3.2(5) on January 17, 2020. Golden State filed a Request for Review of Water Division's Disposition on January 27, 2020.

**Suburban Water Systems**

From August to November of 2019, Suburban performed voluntary initial and confirmation of its four Whittier system wells. All four wells detected levels of PFOS and PFOA that were above the notification level but below the response level. Consequently, Suburban sent notification letters to the SWRCB and the CPUC on December 19, 2019.

On December 6, 2019, Suburban submitted AL 343-W, requesting authorization to open a PFASMA; AL 343W was supplemented by 343-W-A on December 18, 2019 to include an inadvertently missing sheet. Water Division requested additional information related to well testing and cost predictions from Suburban on December 12, 2019. Water Division also requested the results of Suburban's voluntary well tests on December 16, 2019; Suburban timely responded to both data requests. On December 18, 2019, the Public Advocates' Office requested a 2-week extension of the protest period which Water Division granted. On January 6, 2020, Water Division suspended AL 343 as

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additional time beyond the initial review period was required; the Public Advocates' Office then timely protested on January 9, 2020. Water Division rejected Suburban's AL 344-W-A by disposition letter pursuant to General Order 96-B, General Rule 7.6.1 and Water Industry Rule 7.3.2(5) on January 17, 2020. Suburban filed a Request for Review of Water Division's Disposition on January 27, 2020.

### **San Gabriel Valley Water Company**

On March 15, 2019, the SWRCB ordered San Gabriel to begin collecting PFOA and PFAS samples from eight of its 66 active wells, pursuant to Health and Safety Code section 116400 (quarterly for one year). San Gabriel also voluntarily sampled its remaining wells and found concentrations of PFOA and PFAS at concentrations above the notification level but below the response level at Wells W1C, W6C, and W6D.

Consequently, notification letters were sent to the SWRCB and CPUC on December 19, 2019. On February 20, 2020, San Gabriel once again notified the Commission of PFAS detections above the notification levels but below the response levels, this time at Wells 2D, 2E, and 2F.

On January 7, 2020, San Gabriel submitted AL 545-W, requesting authorization to open the PFASMA. Water Division requested additional information related to well testing and cost predictions from San Gabriel on January 13, 2019. On January 17, 2020, the Public Advocates' Office requested a 2-week extension of the protest period; this was not granted because Water Division rejected San Gabriel's AL 545-W by disposition letter pursuant to General Order 96-B, General Rule 7.6.1 and Water Industry Rule 7.3.2(5) the same day. San Gabriel filed a Request for Review of Water Division's Disposition on January 27, 2020.

### **California Water Service Company**

On March 15, 2019, the SWRCB ordered Cal Water to begin collecting PFOA and PFOS samples on 23 of its 700 plus wells as part of the Phase 1 initiative, pursuant to Health and Safety Code section 116400 (quarterly for one year). In AL 2376, Cal Water did not report any test results from the 23 wells that exceeded either the response level or notification level for PFOA and PFOS.

On March 4, 2020, Cal Water submitted AL 2376, requesting authorization to open a PFASMA. On March 19, 2020, the Public Advocates' Office submitted a timely protest to AL 2376. Cal Water responded to Public Advocates' protest on March 26, 2020. Advice Letter 2376 was suspended by Water Division on April 2, 2020 and currently remains a pending matter.

## **NOTICE AND PROTESTS**

In accordance with General Rules 4.3 and 7.2 and Water Industry Rule 4.1 of General Order 96-B, Golden State served copies of Advice Letter (AL) 1795-W to adjacent utilities and other parties requesting such notification on October 31, 2019 with AL-1795A being served on December 5, 2019. Suburban served AL 343-W on December 6, 2019, San Gabriel served AL 545-W on January 7, 2020, and Cal Water served AL 2376 on March 4, 2020. In accordance with Water Industry Rule 3.3 (*id.*), Golden State, San Gabriel, Suburban, and Cal Water also posted the advice letters on their respective websites.

No protests were received in response to the filing for Golden State AL 1795-W-A and San Gabriel AL 545-W. Cal PA's January 17, 2020 request for a two-week extension of the protest period for San Gabriel AL 545-W was rendered moot by Water Division disposition letter of AL 545-W on the same day.

On December 18, 2019, the Public Advocates' Office (Cal PA) requested a two-week extension of the protest period for Suburban's Advice Letter 343. Cal PA then timely protested Advice Letter 343 on January 9, 2020.

On March 19, 2020 Cal PA timely protested Cal Water's AL 2376.

## **REQUEST FOR REVIEW**

By letter, submitted in accordance with Section 7.7.1 of G.O.96-B, the Utilities request Commission review of Water Division's disposition of Golden State's AL 1795-W-A, Suburban's AL 343-W-A, and San Gabriel's AL 545-W. Golden State, Suburban, and San Gabriel outline the specific grounds on which they contend that Water Division's action is erroneous, as summarized below.

1. The rejection of each utility's advice letter does not serve the interests of ratepayers by way of delaying remediation of PFAS contamination.
2. Water Division failed to consider the necessary and substantial incremental costs that are expected to be incurred.
3. The full extent of costs that will be incurred is difficult to forecast at this time but are not speculative and will very likely be substantial.
4. Water Division's claims that any needed treatment costs will not occur before the Utilities' next respective rate cases are not true.

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5. Water Division fails to acknowledge that any incremental PFAS-related costs incurred prior to the Utilities' next respective test years can never be recovered if the ALs are rejected.

Subsequent to Water Division's rejection of the three Advice Letters, Cal PA requested the opportunity to respond to the Utilities' Requests for Review, which Water Division granted.

## **DISCUSSION**

As the utilities note, the Commission has previously authorized memo accounts in the interests of other public policy concerns even if the four conditions usually required for a memorandum account are not met. Due to the significant public health concerns associated with PFAS, we believe the utilities have sufficiently made the case that they should be able to record a certain selection of the requested costs to memorandum accounts, to be subject to future recovery.

The emerging PFAS situation certainly represents an exceptional circumstance not under the utilities' control. While the utilities have some flexibility in allocating their budgets, many PFAS-related costs, such as testing and monitoring, alternative sources of supply, and customer notices merit special attention. These costs could not have been foreseen in the utilities' last respective general rate cases and will occur before the next rate case—indeed, the utilities have already begun incurring many of these costs. Even if these operating expenses are *de minimis* at this time as Water Division argues, PFAS-related expenses have the potential to become significant in the near term, given the rapidly changing regulatory landscape around this class of chemicals. It is in the ratepayer interest to ensure the utilities are supported in responding to this public health concern and provide safe, clean, and affordable water service.

Memorandum account treatment provides the utilities an incentive to be proactive in their response by way of testing and monitoring and procurement of alternative water sources. At the same time, as the memo account process does not guarantee recovery of costs, it encourages the utilities to only incur those costs which are necessary and prudent.

This resolution authorizes the utilities to establish PFASMAAs for a limited selection of the requested PFAS-related costs. Specifically, the utilities are authorized to record PFAS-related operating expenses, including testing and monitoring; customer and public notifications; and alternative sources of supply, to the extent that the utilities are

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not already able to recover these expenses. Given the large amounts of money associated with construction of treatment plant, and the current lack of an MCL to determine the appropriate levels of treatment, we find that increases in rate base should still be requested through the application process, whether through each utility's next rate case or a separate application.

## **COMMENTS**

Public Utilities Code section 311(g)(1) requires that a proposed resolution be served on all parties and be subject to a public review and comment period of 30 days or more, prior to a vote of the Commission on the resolution.

Comments to this draft resolution were received from Golden State, California Water Association (CWA), and the Public Advocates' Office. Golden State's and CWA's comments were largely in support of the resolution, while encouraging the Commission to handle applications for PFAS-related capital projects with appropriate urgency. Public Advocates' comments also supported the resolution, noting that the Commission is correct to exclude rate base costs from the PFASMA. Public Advocates also proposed two factual corrections to the resolution, which have been incorporated above.

## **FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS**

1. By AL 1795-W and 1795-W-A, filed on October 31, 2019 and December 5, 2019, respectively, Golden State Water Company (Golden State) requested to establish a Polyfluoroalkyl Substances Memorandum Account (PFASMA).
2. By AL 343-W and 343-W-A, filed on December 6, 2019 and December 18, 2019, respectively, Suburban Water Systems (Suburban) requested to establish a PFASMA.
3. By AL 545, filed on January 7, 2020, San Gabriel Valley Water Company (San Gabriel) requested to establish a PFASMA.
4. By AL 2376, filed on March 4, 2020, California Water Service Company (Cal Water) requested to establish a PFASMA.
5. On January 17, 2020, Water Division rejected ALs 1795-W-A, 343-W-A, and 545-W because Golden State, Suburban, and San Gabriel had not satisfied the four conditions set forth in Decision 02-08-054 for the establishment of a memorandum account.
6. On January 27, 2020, the Utilities each requested Commission review of Water Division's rejection of their respective advice letters.

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7. Cal Water's pending AL 2376 raises the same issues posed in the rejected advice letters submitted by Golden State, Suburban, and San Gabriel.
8. The Department of Drinking Water (DDW) has established regulatory limits for PFAS in the form of Notification and Response Levels.
9. Given the public health concerns associated with per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), it is in the ratepayers' interest to allow the utilities to recover operating expenses related to PFAS.
10. The utilities have made the showing that regulatory developments related to PFAS represent an event of an exceptional nature that is out of the utilities' control.
11. The utilities have made the showing that PFAS-related operating expenses including laboratory testing and monitoring, customer notice, and alternative sources of supply cannot have been reasonably foreseen in the utilities' last respective general rate cases and will occur before their next scheduled rate cases.
12. The appropriate place to request rate increases to cover incremental plant costs is an application where the utility can make the showing that the incremental plant is necessary to provide safe water service.
13. Cal Water's AL 2376 should be resolved in this Resolution consistent with resolution of the advice letters for Golden State, Suburban, and San Gabriel.

**THEREFORE, IT IS ORDERED THAT:**

1. Water Division's rejections of Golden State Water Company's Advice Letter No. 1795-W-A, Suburban Water Systems' Advice Letter No. 343-W-A, and San Gabriel Valley Water Company's Advice Letter No. 545-W are reversed.
2. California Water Service Company's Advice Letter No. 2376 is approved consistent with Water Division's approval of the advice letters in Ordering Paragraph No. 1 and as discussed in this Resolution.
3. Golden State Water Company, Suburban Water Systems, San Gabriel Valley Water Company, and California Water Service Company are authorized to establish memorandum accounts for tracking of incremental operating costs related to per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), but shall file applications to request increases in rate base for incremental plant and capital costs.

This resolution is effective today.

I certify that the foregoing resolution was duly introduced, passed, and adopted at a conference of the Public Utilities Commission of the State of California held on August 6, 2020; the following Commissioners voting favorably thereon:

\_\_\_\_\_  
/s/ALICE STEBBINS

ALICE STEBBINS

Executive Director

MARYBEL BATJER

President

LIANE M. RANDOLPH

MARTHA GUZMAN ACEVES

CLIFFORD RECHTSCHAFFEN

GENEVIEVE SHIROMA

Commissioners

## **Attachments**

### **Service Lists, emails, USPS**

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#### **Suburban Water Systems – Advice Letter 343-A (Service List)**

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#### **San Gabriel Valley Water Company – Advice Letter 545 (Service List)**

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Joel Reiker [jmreiker@sgvwater.com](mailto:jmreiker@sgvwater.com)

#### **California Water Service Company – Advice Letter 2376 (Service List)**

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City of Santa Fe Springs Water Dept.  
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