



COACHELLA VALLEY WATER DISTRICT

Established in 1918 as a public agency

GENERAL MANAGER
Jim Barrett

ASSISTANT GENERAL MANAGER
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CLERK OF THE BOARD
Sylvia Bermudez

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April 12, 2023

The Honorable Lena A. Gonzalez
Senator, District 33
1021 O Street, Suite 7720
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Senator Gonzalez,

Subject: SB 57 – Oppose Unless Amended

The Coachella Valley Water District (CVWD) must respectfully oppose your bill, SB 57, which would make temperature extremes a factor in prohibiting a service disconnection for nonpayment. CVWD serves approximately 300,000 residents in its 1,000 square-miles of service area ranging from the San Geronio Pass to the Salton Sea, mostly within the Coachella Valley area of Riverside County, including small areas within Imperial and San Diego counties.

CVWD certainly appreciates the need to consider health and safety impacts to vulnerable customers before disconnecting water service, but these concerns have already been comprehensively addressed for public water agencies. SB 998 (2018-Dodd) established the Water Shutoff Protection Act, which mandated that water agencies take multiple steps to avoid disconnecting water service, including a prohibition on shutting off water when it would threaten the “life or health and safety of a resident...” (Fact Sheet: Water Shutoff Protection Act, State Water Resources Control Board.) Like SB 57, the Water Shutoff Protection Act also requires water agencies to adopt and publish written water shutoff policy that complies with the Act.

SB 998 worked through a number of issues specific to water service that are missing in SB 57, such as: rights given to tenants when a landlord does not pay a water bill under a master meter or when a leak is detected at a vacant building and the account is delinquent. In addition to these issues that apply to all water agencies, CVWD would be uniquely impacted by SB 57 because our service area is largely desert where daytime temperatures remain above 95 degree for up to four months out of the year, if not more.

For these reasons, CVWD respectfully asks that SB 57 be amended to delete references to public water systems. With that amendment, CVWD would gladly remove its opposition.

Sincerely,

J. M. Barrett
General Manager