



News from
Councilmember Todd Gloria

District Three

NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release: February 25, 2016

Contact: Adrian Granda, 619-847-8338

Water Rate Assistance for Low Income San Diegans on the Horizon
Environment Committee Approves New Program to Help Avoid Water Shut Offs

SAN DIEGO, CA (February 25, 2016) – The City of San Diego’s Environment Committee today approved a new program to provide assistance to low income San Diegans with paying their water bills. During the hearing for water rate increases approved by the City Council in November of last year, Councilmember Gloria requested City staff develop a program to help residents struggling to keep up with rising living costs.

City staff from the Public Utilities Department presented a report which recommended establishing a fund for the program, titled *Help to Others* or *H2O*, as well as a timeline for its rollout. The program as proposed would solicit donations from ratepayers through an insert included on residents’ water bills. Upon gaining Council approval, staff would begin mailing the inserts in late spring to estimate the level of donations expected for the program over a six to eight month period before returning to Committee for additional direction.

“Access to water is a basic right,” said Councilmember Gloria. **“We must provide an option for low income and fixed income San Diegans to avoid shut offs and maintain their access to that vital resource in light of recent rate increases. Today’s action is the first step towards establishing that option through the low income ratepayer assistance fund and I look forward to working with my colleagues on the Council to ensure the program is a success.”**

The timeline provided by staff proposes the program would be available in July of 2017 and could impact 10,000 households. Councilmember Gloria asked staff to explore options for providing the assistance earlier, as well as alternatives, such as corporate sponsorships or general fund allocations, to maximize revenue for the fund.

The item now moves on to the full City Council for their consideration.

###