



## NEWS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**  
Thursday, May 17, 2018

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### **City to collect millions in unpaid utility accounts** ***Property Liens and Assessments to Begin in 2018***

STOCKTON, Calif. – Millions of dollars in unpaid utility accounts may result in property liens and assessments beginning this year, 2018. This week, the City of Stockton sent letters to property owners who are also the utility account holder, advising it will place a lien for delinquent charges on the property, unless the delinquent amount is paid.

“The City provides sewer and stormwater services and bills for garbage and recycling services for the entire City,” said Chief Financial Officer Matt Paulin. “Most of the unpaid utility accounts are in areas where the City is not the water service provider and customers receive water service from Cal Water. In areas where the City provides water service, water is shut off when utility bills are not paid and less than 1% of these accounts remain unpaid each month. In the Cal Water service area, the City cannot shut water off because we are not the water service provider. We make every effort to collect delinquent accounts in the Cal Water service area, including sending monthly bills, phone calls, posting notices to the property and sending accounts to collections.”

Property owners with delinquent utility accounts were sent a Notice of Violation and

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Intent to Record a Lien advising them that the City intends to record a lien if the balance of their delinquent account, including fees, remains unpaid. Property owners who receive notices may appeal the lien by requesting an Administrative Hearing within 10 days of the date of the lien notice mailing, and paying an Administrative Hearing Fee of \$89.75 for the lien appeal process. Property owners may avoid the recording of a lien by paying the balance owed within 30 days of the lien notice mailing. If the property owner does not pay in-full or does not comply with the terms established by the Administrative Hearing Officer, the City will file the lien.

Property owners were also sent a Notice of Charges to be Assessed advising them that the City intends to assess the balance owed. Once a lien is filed by the City, Administrative Hearings will be held regarding the proposed assessments to confirm whether the charges should be added to the property tax roll report for the City Council's consideration. A City Council Public Hearing will be held in July to approve the written report of assessments and to authorize the amounts owed to be assessed on the owner's property tax bill; additional assessment fees will also apply. The assessed charges are sent to the San Joaquin County Treasurer-Tax Collector for collection on the tax roll.

In March 2018, the Stockton City Council approved a resolution that reaffirmed and reenacted the City's previously approved rates to bring them under the authority of the California Health and Safety Code. This authorizes the City to lien and assess delinquent utility charges to the property tax roll, only where the property owner is the billed party.

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There are still millions of dollars in unpaid accounts that are billed to tenants of property owners. The City will continue with collection efforts for tenant-billed accounts through notices and referring accounts to a third-party collection agency.

“The operation, maintenance and improvements for utilities are supported by ratepayers,” continued CFO Paulin. “When accounts are left unpaid or extra efforts are required to collect delinquent accounts, it diminishes the resources available to support these utilities.”

For questions or additional information, please contact City of Stockton Utility Billing at 209-937-8295.

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