





COMMISSION SUMMARY

AGENDA CATEGORY: Other Reports

ITEM NUMBER:

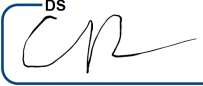

DATE: April 21, 2021


SUBJECT	Reinstatement of Late Fees for All Customer Accounts
SUMMARY	In an effort to protect public health and to provide support to our customers, on March 12, 2020, WSSC Water suspended late fees and water service turnoffs. Since the beginning of the pandemic, we have ensured that water continued to flow to all customers throughout this health crisis.
SPECIAL COMMENTS	The purpose of this briefing is to inform Commissioners of our plans to reinstate late fees for all customer accounts. This change will be effective on bills generated as of June 1, 2021 and will apply to all customer accounts (commercial, government, and residential). <i>There are no plans to resume water service turnoffs at this time.</i>
CONTRACT NO./ REFERENCE NO.	N/A
COSTS	N/A
AMENDMENT/ CHANGE ORDER NO. AMOUNT	N/A
MBE PARTICIPATION	N/A
PRIOR STAFF/ COMMITTEE REVIEW	Carla A. Reid, General Manager/CEO 
PRIOR STAFF/ COMMITTEE APPROVALS	Monica Johnson, Deputy General Manager, Strategy & Partnerships  Crystal Knight-Lee, Director, Customer Service 
RECOMMENDATION TO COMMISSION	Information
COMMISSION ACTION	



Interoffice Memorandum

To: Commissioners

Thru: Carla A. Reid, General Manager/CEO 
Monica J. Johnson, Deputy General Manager, Strategy and Partnerships 

From: Crystal Knight-Lee, Director, Customer Service 

Date: April 8, 2021

Re: **Reinstatement of Late Fees for All Customer Accounts**

The purpose of this memo is to provide you with WSSC Water's plan for resuming late fees on **June 1, 2021**. Please note that there are no plans to resume turnoffs at this time.

Background

In an effort to protect public health and to provide support to our customers, on March 12, 2020, WSSC Water suspended late fees and water service turnoffs. Since the beginning of the pandemic, we have ensured that water continued to flow to all customers throughout this health crisis.

Discussion

Over the past 12-months, we have continued to monitor key health, economic and financial benchmarks to understand the impact of the pandemic on our customers and to help us determine when some of our business operations could resume. Some of the key indicators WSSC Water has been monitoring include: 7-day Rolling Averages of Case Rates per 100k; Statewide Vaccine Data, Unemployment in Prince George's and Montgomery counties, and overall account delinquencies. Some of our observations are below:

- **COVID-19 Case Rates** - As of April 7, 2021, the County positivity rate for the bi-county area per 100k residents had dropped to just over 15.13 cases per day down from 53.42 cases per day on January 14, 2021.

Commissioners
Resumption of Late Fees
April 8, 2021

- COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution - The region is experiencing improvements in the distribution of the vaccine to residents in the State of Maryland and a relaxation of eligibility restrictions. As of April 8, 2021, approximately 43.9% of the state's eligible population (over age 16) and 35.3% of all residents had received the vaccine. Effective April 12, 2021, all Marylanders age 16 and over will be eligible to schedule appointments and get vaccinated.
- Unemployment Statistics – Unemployment rates as of December 2020 are showing some improvement for Prince George's at 8% and Montgomery County at 5.7%, compared to 10.1% and 8.2% respectively in June 2020. Unemployment rates overall remain high in comparison to pre-COVID-19 levels when rates were below 4% in both counties.
- Past Due Accounts - WSSC Water continues to experience a high rate of past due accounts. As of April 7, 2021, approximately 86,595 accounts and \$62.9M was past due. Overall, approximately one in five customers are currently past due.

Based on these initial signs of recovery and the current state of our past due accounts, we plan to reinstate our practice of assessing late fees for all customer accounts. This change will be effective for all bills generated as of June 1, 2021, including bills for fire hydrant meter rentals. As customary, bill payment is due within 30 days of the bill generation date. If bills are not paid by their due date, then late fees will apply, as required by Maryland law. We believe this is the best decision for WSSC Water and our customers at this time. Our position on the practice of water service turnoffs has not changed. As mentioned earlier, there are no plans to resume turnoffs at this time.

Next Steps

1. We are also pursuing two enhancements to further assist our customers:
 - a. Waiver of late fees for customers enrolled in the Customer Assistance Program.
 - b. Waiver of late fees for customers who enter into a payment arrangement and pay their balance in full.
2. We are developing a robust communication plan to begin notifying our customers this month of these changes.
3. Later this spring, we will seek your approval on the customer regulations that need to change to permit the enhancements mentioned above (#1a. and b.).

Please let us know if you have any questions.

Attachment:
Regional Utility/City Scan of Late Fees

Commissioners
 Resumption of Late Fees
 April 8, 2021

Attachment
Regional Utility/City Scan of Late Fees

Utility	Date Late Fees Suspended	Current Status	Date Resumption Projected
DC Water	3/13/2020	No Change	No Date/TBD
Fairfax Water	3/13/2020	No Change	No Date/TBD
Loudoun Water	3/23/2020	No Change	No Date/TBD
Prince William	3/16/2020	No Change	No Date/TBD
City of Rockville	3/20/2020	No Change	No Date/TBD
Frederick	3/15/2020	No Change	No Date/TBD
Arlington	3/23/2020	No Change	No Date/TBD
City of Bowie	3/15/2020	Resumed Late Fees 11/15/2020	N/A
Baltimore City	Billing Halted in Feb 2020	Resumed Late Fees 12/31/2020	N/A
Baltimore County	Billing Halted in Feb 2020	Resumed Late Fees 12/31/2020	N/A

Certificate Of Completion

Envelope Id: 12749709A01E408E97A0F9230F452393	Status: Completed
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Source Envelope:	
Document Pages: 4	Signatures: 0
Certificate Pages: 5	Initials: 6
AutoNav: Enabled	Envelope Originator:
Envelopeld Stamping: Enabled	Crystal Knight-Lee
Time Zone: (UTC-08:00) Pacific Time (US & Canada)	14501 Sweitzer Lane
	Laurel, MD 20707
	Crystal.Knight-Lee@wsscwater.com
	IP Address: 205.167.187.197


Record Tracking

Status: Original 4/8/2021 3:34:27 PM	Holder: Crystal Knight-Lee Crystal.Knight-Lee@wsscwater.com	Location: DocuSign
Security Appliance Status: Connected	Pool: FedRamp	
Storage Appliance Status: Connected	Pool: WSSC Water	Location: DocuSign

Signer Events

Crystal Knight-Lee
crystal.knight-lee@wsscwater.com
Director, Customer Service
WSSC Water
Security Level: Email, Account Authentication (Optional)

Signature



Signature Adoption: Pre-selected Style
Using IP Address: 205.167.187.197


Timestamp

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Viewed: 4/8/2021 3:38:20 PM
Signed: 4/8/2021 3:38:27 PM

Electronic Record and Signature Disclosure:

Not Offered via DocuSign

Monica JJohnson
Monica.Johnson@wsscwater.com
WSSC Water
Security Level: Email, Account Authentication (Optional)



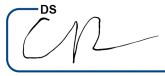
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Signed using mobile

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Electronic Record and Signature Disclosure:

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Carla Reid
Carla.Reid@wsscwater.com
General Manager/CEO
Security Level: Email, Account Authentication (Optional)



Signature Adoption: Drawn on Device
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Signed using mobile

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Signed: 4/9/2021 4:45:44 AM

Electronic Record and Signature Disclosure:

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Editor Delivery Events	Status	Timestamp
Agent Delivery Events	Status	Timestamp
Intermediary Delivery Events	Status	Timestamp

Certified Delivery Events	Status	Timestamp
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Carbon Copy Events	Status	Timestamp
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Deirdra Walker Deirdra.Walker@wsscwater.com WSSC Water Security Level: Email, Account Authentication (Optional) Electronic Record and Signature Disclosure: Not Offered via DocuSign	COPIED	Sent: 4/9/2021 4:45:46 AM Viewed: 4/9/2021 8:00:41 AM
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Cindy Sullivan Cindy.Sullivan@wsscwater.com WSSC Water Security Level: Email, Account Authentication (Optional) Electronic Record and Signature Disclosure: Not Offered via DocuSign	COPIED	Sent: 4/9/2021 4:45:47 AM
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Notary Events	Signature	Timestamp
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Envelope Summary Events	Status	Timestamps
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Completed	Security Checked	4/9/2021 4:45:47 AM

Payment Events	Status	Timestamps
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Electronic Record and Signature Disclosure
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