



May 9, 2024

The Honorable Laphonza Butler
United States Senate
112 Hart Senate Office Bldg.
Washington, D.C. 20510

Subject: Continued Funding for the Low-Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP)

Dear Senator Butler:

On behalf of the City of Santa Rosa, I am writing to urge you to provide continued funding for the Low-Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP).

NATALIE ROGERS
Mayor

MARK STAPP
Vice Mayor

EDDIE ALVAREZ

VICTORIA FLEMING

DIANNA MACDONALD

JEFF OKREPKIE
CHRIS ROGERS

Santa Rosa Water established Help2Others (H2O), a financial assistance program that provides financial assistance to qualifying residential customers on a portion of their monthly water and sewer service charges. Since 2016, the H2O program has provided over \$1.4 million in subsidies to over 1,000 customers. Due to California law, establishing low-income rate assistance programs is challenging because water and sewer rates cannot be used to subsidize one class of customers.

Santa Rosa Water is fortunate to have dedicated non-rate revenues to administer the H2O program, however, funds are limited.

Like many, Santa Rosa Water and its customers are still feeling the economic impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as, California Governor Newsom's Executive Order N-42-20 issued on March 4, 2020, putting a moratorium on water shut-offs. With the impending end date of the temporary LIHWAP that Congress created under the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021 and the American Rescue Plan (P.L. 116-206; P.L. 117-2), it is critical that Congress continue to fund LIHWAP in Fiscal Year 2025 (FY25) to help alleviate the burden of rising water and sewer bills on low-income households.

Senator Alex Padilla (D-Calif.) is leading an effort urging the Senate Appropriations Committee to fund LIHWAP in FY25 to help low-income families maintain vital water service. We respectfully request that you sign onto the letter he has prepared. LIHWAP quickly became an essential lifeline for millions of people and the water and sewer systems serving them. Since program inception, Santa Rosa Water customers have received over \$207k in financial assistance.

For these reasons, I encourage you to help ensure families across the country have access to clean and affordable drinking water by signing onto Senator Padilla's letter requesting continued funding for LIHWAP in FY25.

Sincerely,

Natalie Rogers, Mayor