

For Immediate Release

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**Clean Water Advocates Applaud Immediate Statewide Moratorium on
Water Shutoffs to Protect Californians**

*As COVID-19 Shows There is No Public Health Without Clean Water for All, Governor Newsom
Takes Important Steps to Protect Public Health and Combat the Spread of Disease*

Group Supports Further Action to Meet Urgent Drinking Water Needs During COVID-19 Crisis

SACRAMENTO, CA - Clean Water Action, Community Water Center, Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability, and NextGen Policy released the following statement today in response to the Governor's [Executive Order N-42-20](#):

“Gov. Newsom’s Executive Order N-42-20 recognizes that access to safe, clean and affordable drinking water is a basic human right, not a privilege. The COVID-19 crisis demonstrates that access to safe and affordable water is imperative for public health, for combating the spread of disease, and for ensuring that people can stay safe in their homes.”

“Today is a major step forward and we thank Governor Newsom and his team for their leadership in this time of crisis. We now look forward to working in partnership to swiftly implement the Executive Order and to build upon it to make sure that every Californian has the safe, clean and affordable water they need to stay safe and shelter-in-place during the COVID-19 crisis.”

“We applaud the immediate institution of a statewide water shutoff moratorium and thank Governor Newsom and his team for leading on this issue. We also strongly support the provision requiring reconnection for households who have had their water shut off since March 4 and urge water agencies that have not already done so to expand their reconnection efforts to

all occupied homes previously shut off for nonpayment. We appreciate that the Order does not require vulnerable families to provide proof of financial hardship for the protections to apply and does not require customers eligible for reconnection to be aware of the new policy and affirmatively request it.”

“And now the urgent work to implement the Order and protect every Californian’s basic human right to water must begin. We look forward to working with the State Board and local jurisdictions to ensure that reconnections of those with water disconnected since March 4 happen quickly and safely, and that water systems provide regular updates on the status of all customer shutoffs. Further, Californians whose water was shutoff before March 4 due to inability to pay are no less deserving of safe water — how can families shelter-in-place or wash their hands without access to safe water? We urge the state, local jurisdictions and water districts to reconnect all Californians who currently lack access to water due to non-payment immediately.”

“The state must also immediately allocate resources to programs like the State Water Board’s bottled water programs and programs providing assistance to vulnerable water systems. We must recognize that an estimated 1 million Californians still lack access to reliable safe water through their tap, and as such must seek out alternative drinking water sources like bottled water — in many cases forcing them to leave their homes just to secure this basic necessity. These emergency resources are desperately needed to address the bottled water shortage that has magnified the challenges faced by the hundreds of thousands of Californians who lack safe tap water”

“To successfully implement this Order, the Governor should require waiver of late fees and penalties, suspend the use of other severe collections practices, ensure opportunities for extended repayment plans after the crisis ends, and work with the legislature to establish a process to address the broader challenge of water affordability by implementing a statewide low-income rate assistance program for water, just like we have for energy and even phone service.“

“Governor Newsom has been a strong leader in the movement for the Human Right to Water, from the passage of the Safe and Affordable Drinking Water Fund to today’s announcement. We thank Governor Newsom for his leadership and are ready to immediately begin working in partnership to implement the Executive Order and build on it to meet the urgent drinking water needs of our state.”

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Community Water Center (CWC) believes all communities should have access to safe, clean, and affordable water. Founded in 2006, CWC works toward realizing the Human Right to Water for all Californians through education, organizing, and advocacy.

Web: <https://www.communitywatercenter.org/>. Twitter: @CWaterC

Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability works alongside the most impacted communities to advocate for sound policy and eradicate injustice to secure equal access to opportunity regardless of wealth, race, income and place. We work with community leaders throughout the San Joaquin Valley and Eastern Coachella Valley on such issues as safe affordable drinking water, basic transit services, wastewater services, decent affordable housing, and the right to live free from industrial pollution with infrastructure that supports healthy lifestyles. Through co-powerment, organizing, litigation, policy advocacy, and research, we confront California's stark inequalities manifest in too many of California's low income communities and communities of color. Twitter: LCJandA FB: @lcjcalifornia IG: @leadership_counsel Web: leadershipcounsel.org

Clean Water Action is a national nonprofit founded in 1972 to promote citizen engagement and action to protect our environment, health, economic well-being and community quality of life. Clean Water Action organizes strong grassroots groups, coalitions and campaigns to solve environmental and community problems. For more information, visit our website at www.cleanwater.org or follow us on Twitter @cleanh2oca.

NextGen Policy was originally founded in 2014 to focus on climate and environmental policy, in recent years it has broadened its scope to advance solutions to economic, environmental, and social justice. Specifically, our policy portfolio now encompasses topics such as: electric vehicles and renewable energy, criminal justice reform and immigration issues, healthcare and food insecurity, mental health and voting rights, student loan debt and the census, veterans issues and consumer protections, and affordable housing and environmental justice. For more, visit www.nextgenpolicy.org or follow us on Twitter @NextGen_Policy.

The Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) is an international nonprofit environmental organization with more than 3 million members and online activists. Since 1970, our lawyers, scientists, and other environmental specialists have worked to protect the world's natural resources, public health, and the environment. NRDC has offices in New York City; Washington, D.C.; Los Angeles; San Francisco; Chicago; Bozeman, Montana; and Beijing. Visit us at www.nrdc.org and follow us on Twitter @NRDC