

**Nicole Genzale**

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**From:** N. Johnson <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 17, 2022 5:54 PM  
**To:** Carol Atwood; Dan McIntyre; Jan Lee; Arun Goel; Ann Marie Johnson; Marisol Rubio; Richard M. Halket; Georgean M. Vonheeder-Leopold  
**Cc:** Nicole Genzale  
**Subject:** LIHWAP

[EXTERNAL – check for red flags]

Dear Administrative Services Director Atwood, General Manager McIntyre, Assistant General Manager Lee, and Members of the Board of Directors:

Ms. Atwood's dismissive response dated May 9, 2022 both saddens and disappoints. Why would DSRSD refuse to participate in assistance programs that would be beneficial to both customers hard hit by the pandemic and its consequences as well as the district itself? Are the administrative costs unduly burdensome? Let's take a fresh look at this.

In her letter Ms. Atwood mentions a **closed** rent-relief program that--as the name would suggest--applied to **renters**. Most distressed homeowners have had to wait until this year for any hope of relief. When COVID hit, the first priority was to house the homeless and the second priority was to help distressed renters and their landlords. The few county funds that were supposed to help affected homeowners were instead diverted to rent relief. Although I have some knowledge of ERAP, I do not know how much money actually was used to pay past-due water bills. Qualified tenants and landlords were able to request up to 18 months of assistance during the covered period (April 1, 2020 through March 31, 2022).

DSRSD chose not to participate in the California Water and Wastewater Arrearage Payment Program

(see [https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/arrearage\\_payment\\_program](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/arrearage_payment_program)). That program covered arrearages accrued between March 4, 2020 and June 15, 2021. If you go to [https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/arrearage\\_payment\\_program/docs/pm](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/arrearage_payment_program/docs/pm)

[nt-status-arrearage.pdf](#), you will see how many water companies--large and small--participated in and received monies from the drinking water arrearage portion of the program. Since the participating water companies were more involved in the entire process, there would have been noticeable administrative costs.

LIHWAP applies to arrearages accrued prior to and during the pandemic. Since most of the administrative burden is shouldered by the LSPs (such as Spectrum Community Services) and HORNE, there should be far fewer administrative costs for the water retailers. The fewer the arrearages, the easier the process should be. HORNE will deal directly with the retailers. The LSPs will reach out to the community at large and process applications. Since most of the LSPs have extensive experience with LIHEAP, they know what they are doing and they know what information to collect. Participating retailers should post information on their websites and inform all customers with arrearages of the program. Don't assume that all eligible customers know about and have taken advantage of available low-income discount programs. In addition, please bear in mind that the arrearage assistance programs offered are **in addition to** already existing low-income assistance programs provided by various water retailers. These are complementary programs. One does not replace the other.

East Bay MUD, Cal Water, the City of Pleasanton, the City of Livermore, ACWD, and other water districts in our region and throughout the state will be participating in LIHWAP. I strongly urge DSRSD to do the right thing--reconsider your decision and elect to participate.