

 SAN DIEGO WORKERS BENEFIT COUNCIL
3014 Imperial Ave San Diego CA 92102
State Water Resources & Control Board meeting
Monday August 14, 2017
Esteban Bahena Speech

My name is Esteban Bahena. I live in the County of San Diego and am a representative of the San Diego Workers Benefit Council. I am disabled with different serious illnesses. **It's been almost a year since my water service was shut off.** I am here to demand that the state water board provide much more than 20% for the rate assistance program and the state should ban all water shutoffs throughout the state.

As a human being, water is a vital necessity for human use and human consumption. As the constitution states, in part, the government has responsibility to "establish justice...promote the general welfare," and by shutting off people's water, the government is not abiding by its constitutional duty.

Previous tenants vandalized my home and broke the pipes in my house. It took me a year to evict them with legal assistance. My bill climbed to about \$2,000 and as of now it's been many months in which I have had no water service. I struggle every day to go to the gym to take a shower and use the restroom. I spend about \$45 every week in gas and \$20 monthly on a gym membership. I can't do my dishes in my own home. I have to buy disposable plates and eating utensils. I spend about \$2,500 each year unnecessarily because the city will not negotiate a payment plan or waiver for my water bill, which is now close to \$2,000. And this amount is growing each month because the San Diego water department is charging me a sewer charge for water I'm not even using. I have to go to restaurants and the gym to use the bathroom, and sometimes these places are closed.

I have developed ~~many~~ infirmities such as:

1. diabetes, insulin dependent
2. congestive heart failure with atrial fibrillation
3. mental illness due to stress, depression, and anxiety

I am mostly homebound using an oxygen machine and a sleeping machine which requires water to run. How am I supposed to turn this situation around with a \$900 monthly social security check? I have to borrow money monthly because I have a \$1,000 mortgage to pay as well. ~~AND~~ ^{AS} look for food ...

I know that there are others like me across San Diego, and the whole entire state, which are also experiencing unusual and extreme suffering due to lack of water. You need to know that many lives are hanging in the balance with the decisions that you will make for this plan. Water is life. The State Water Board has a responsibility to "ensure proper water resource allocation and efficient use, for the benefit of present and future generations." That's why we need much more than a 20%-35% subsidy, **and you must make water affordable for everyone.** The government has a responsibility to stop water shut offs for all residents. Thank you. *VERY much ...*