

**Carla Fuller's speech to the State Water Board 6/28/17
regarding the inadequacy of the LIRA program
& the need for a moratorium on shut-offs**

Good evening. My name is Carla Fuller. I am a receptionist, living in Oakland. I am speaking to you today as a member and volunteer advocate with the Service Workers Project for Affordable Water and Utilities, or SWPAWU.

The State Water Board's mission statement is, "To preserve, enhance, and restore the quality of California's water resources and drinking water for the protection of the environment, public health, and all beneficial uses, and to ensure proper water resource allocation and efficient use, for the benefit of present and future generations."

As the state body whose duty it is to oversee everyone's right to water, the models and programs that you put forward are far from adequate to accomplish that goal. An "additional scenario" definitely needs to be implemented. Any solution should include ALL low-income individuals (schools, day care centers, etc.), as an increasing number of multi-family apartments and mobile home parts are being pressured by landlords to pay for water bills.

An assistance program alone does very little to actually protect the rights of human beings to water. In the East Bay, EBMUD has their CAP, Customer Assistance Program. It discounts water service by 50% and wastewater service by 35%. Yet they have only have 6,000 ratepayers enrolled, about 3%, despite hundreds of thousands of their rate payers who are eligible.

There are about ½ a dozen assistance programs for PG&E for example, especially LIHEAP (Low-income Heating & Energy Assistance Program) and CARE, which provides a discount to families. Yet PG&E shuts off 1500 families' power every day, even with these programs! We know this because we assist families daily to restore water and utility service and have restored power and water and stopped shut offs for over 500 families in the last year alone. PG&E customer service representatives do not make this process easy. They now more and more are refusing to speak to our volunteer advocates. And the CPUC allows PG&E to get away with this!

How can you protect public health and say that water is being properly allocated when the cost is so prohibitive that more and more California residents don't have access to water at all? To accomplish your goal and mission statement, we demand that the State Water Board install a permanent moratorium on disconnection of water service; eliminate all fees and fines, disconnect and reconnect fees, deposits, water theft fees; and forgive all past water debt for families living at or below 200% of the federal poverty level.