

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY MAY 23, 2014

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY APRIL 24, 2014

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY APRIL 9, 2014

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—2013–14 REGULAR SESSION

ASSEMBLY BILL

No. 1434

Introduced by Assembly Member Yamada

January 6, 2014

An act to add Section 12092 to the Government Code, relating to low-income water assistance.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 1434, as amended, Yamada. Low-Income Water Rate Assistance Program.

Under existing law, the Public Utilities Commission has regulatory authority over public utilities, including water corporations, as defined. Existing law authorizes the commission to fix the rates and charges for every public utility, and requires that those rates and charges be just and reasonable. Existing law requires the Public Utilities Commission to consider, and authorizes the commission to implement, programs to provide rate relief for low-income ratepayers of a water corporation.

Existing law establishes the Department of Community Services and Development in state government and vests with the department various powers and authority regarding the implementation and administration of programs to assist low-income individuals in the state.

This bill would require the department, no later than January 1, 2016, in collaboration with the State Board of Equalization and relevant stakeholders, to develop a plan for the funding and implementation of the Low-Income Water Rate Assistance Program, which ~~includes~~ *would*

~~include specified elements. The bill would require the department, no later than January 1, 2017, provided a funding source has been identified and the moneys have been appropriated, to establish the program to require water service providers to provide water bill discounts and subsidies to eligible low-income residential water ratepayers who enroll in the program, in accordance with prescribed requirements. The bill would create the Low-Income Water Rate Assistance Fund in the State Treasury, and would authorize the department, upon appropriation by the Legislature, to expend moneys deposited in the fund for the purposes of the program. The bill would require the department, no later than January 1, 2016, to report to the Legislature on its findings regarding the feasibility and desired structure of the program to be implemented pursuant to the bill, including any recommendations for additional legislative action that may need to be taken to ensure the successful implementation of the program taken.~~

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes.
State-mandated local program: no.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

- 1 SECTION 1. Section 12092 is added to the Government Code,
- 2 to read:
- 3 12092. (a) This section shall be known, and may be cited, as
- 4 the Low-Income Water Rate Assistance Act.
- 5 (b) No later than January 1, 2016, the department, in
- 6 collaboration with the board and relevant stakeholders, shall
- 7 develop a plan for the funding and implementation of the
- 8 Low-Income Water Rate Assistance Program, which shall include
- 9 all of the following elements:
- 10 (1) A description of the method for collecting moneys to support
- 11 and implement the program.
- 12 (2) A description of the mechanism for providing funding
- 13 assistance under the program through either direct credits to
- 14 enrollees in the program or reimbursements to water service
- 15 providers.
- 16 (3) A description of the method to be used to determine the
- 17 amount of moneys that may need to be collected from water
- 18 ratepayers to fund the program. This section does not authorize
- 19 the imposition of a state charge to fund the program.

1 ~~(e) (1) No later than January 1, 2017, and provided a funding~~
2 ~~source has been identified and the moneys have been appropriated;~~
3 ~~the department shall establish the program, which shall require~~
4 ~~water service providers in the state to provide discounts or subsidies~~
5 ~~for eligible low-income residential water ratepayers who enroll in~~
6 ~~the program.~~

7 ~~(2) The department may require documentation, including tax~~
8 ~~documents, pay stubs, wage statements, or other documents~~
9 ~~providing proof of income, of an enrollee's eligibility for the~~
10 ~~program.~~

11 ~~(d) The program required to be developed pursuant to this~~
12 ~~section shall ensure all of the following:~~

13 ~~(1) A water discount or subsidy not exceeding 20 percent of an~~
14 ~~enrollee's total water bill, or sixty dollars (\$60) per month,~~
15 ~~whichever is less, shall be made available per billing period to an~~
16 ~~eligible enrollee in the program for residential water service~~
17 ~~provided by a water service provider.~~

18 ~~(2) A water ratepayer who is enrolled in the program may~~
19 ~~receive assistance in the form of a discount or credit based on water~~
20 ~~usage and the total amount of the enrollee's most recent water bill.~~

21 ~~(e) The Low-Income Water Rate Assistance Fund is hereby~~
22 ~~created in the State Treasury. Moneys deposited in the fund may~~
23 ~~be expended by the department, upon appropriation by the~~
24 ~~Legislature, for the purposes of the program.~~

25 ~~(f)~~

26 ~~(c) No later than January 1, 2016, the department shall report~~
27 ~~to the Legislature on its findings regarding the feasibility and~~
28 ~~desired structure of the program to be implemented pursuant to~~
29 ~~this section, including program, including any recommendations~~
30 ~~for additional legislative action that may need to be taken to ensure~~
31 ~~the successful implementation of the program taken.~~

32 ~~(g)~~

33 ~~(d) For purposes of this section, the following terms have the~~
34 ~~following meanings:~~

35 ~~(1) "Board" means the State Board of Equalization.~~

36 ~~(2) "Department" means the Department of Community Services~~
37 ~~and Development.~~

38 ~~(3) "Fund" means the Low-Income Water Rate Assistance Fund.~~

39 ~~(4)~~

1 (3) “Low-income” means a household with income that is equal
2 to or no greater than 200 percent of the federal poverty guideline
3 level. For one-person households, program eligibility shall be
4 based on two-person household guideline levels.

5 ~~(5)~~

6 (4) “Program” means the Low-Income Water Rate Assistance
7 Program.

8 ~~(6) “Water service provider” means a water corporation, public~~
9 ~~utility district, or other entity that provides water service to~~
10 ~~residential water customers in the state.~~