

DATE SUBMITTED February 1, 2024
 SUBMITTED BY City Manager
 DATE ACTION REQUIRED 2/1/24

COUNCIL ACTION
 PUBLIC HEARING REQUIRED
 RESOLUTION
 ORDINANCE 1ST READING
 ORDINANCE 2ND READING
 CITY CLERK'S INITIALS

**IMPERIAL CITY COUNCIL
 AGENDA ITEM**

SUBJECT: DISCUSSION/ACTION: 1. Letter of Support request from the office of U.S. Senator Padilla. Low-Income Water Assistance Program	
DEPARTMENT INVOLVED:	
BACKGROUND/SUMMARY: United States Senator Alex Padilla intends to introduce legislation to be known as the Low-Income Water Assistance Program. The program originated as an emergency measure during the COVID pandemic. The intent is to continue the program to assist qualifying families with payment for water and wastewater.	
FISCAL IMPACT: No fiscal impact.	FINANCE INITIALS <u>DP</u>
STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Authorize Mayor to sign the letter of support.	DEPT. INITIALS _____
MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION: <u>approve</u>	CITY MANAGER'S INITIALS <u>DM</u>
MOTION:	
SECONDED: AYES: NAYES: ABSENT:	APPROVED <input type="checkbox"/> REJECTED <input type="checkbox"/> DISAPPROVED <input type="checkbox"/> DEFERRED <input type="checkbox"/> REFERRED TO:



CITY COUNCIL
Robert Amparano- Mayor
James Tucker- Mayor Pro-Tern
Katie Burnworth-Councilmember
Ida Obeso-Martinez- Councilmember
Stacy Mendoza- Councilmember

CITY CLERK
Kristina Shields

CITY MANAGER
Dennis H. Morita

CITY ATTORNEY
Katherine Turner

February 1, 2024

The Honorable Alex Padilla
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Re: Support for the Low-Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP) Establishment Act

Dear Senator Padilla,

On behalf of the City of Imperial, I write in support of the “Low-Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP) Establishment Act” to establish a national, low-income water assistance program.

As you know, the Low-Income Water Assistance Program is an emergency program created by Congress to help households afford drinking water and wastewater services during the COVID-19 pandemic. LIHWAP expired in September however, ending a lifeline for families in need across the country. Congress established the first-ever national water assistance program during the pandemic, recognizing the public health and economic imperative of maintaining water services. But as water and sewer bills are rising more quickly than inflation and increasingly faster than energy bills, medical expenses, and household incomes, the need for a national, water assistance program remains.

Water service providers, environmental and public interest organizations, consumer advocates, and labor unions agree that the need for low-income household water assistance is just as important to public health and economic development as other basic needs such as home energy and nutrition, which have benefitted from Federal support for decades.

The “Low-Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP) Establishment Act” would formally establish LIHWAP to assist low-income households in paying arrearages and other rates charged to such households for drinking water or wastewater services. Like the original program, benefits under this legislation would be targeted towards households with low incomes and that have the highest home water burdens and importantly, allow for recipients of programs such as the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program, SNAP, TANF, SSI, and means-tested Veterans programs to be **categorically-eligible for LIHWAP assistance**.

We appreciate your leadership in introducing this legislation and look forward to working with you as Chair of the Senate Environment and Public Works Subcommittee on Fisheries, Water, and Wildlife to ensure families across the country have access to clean and affordable drinking water and sanitation services.

Sincerely,

Robert Amparano
Mayor