2012 Seattle City Council Green Sheet

Ready for Notebook

Tab	Action	Option	Version
8	1	A	1

Budget Action Title: Amend and pass as amended C.B. 117313 - the SPU low income emergency assistance ordinance.

Councilmembers: Conlin; Harrell; O'Brien

Staff Analyst: Meg Moorehead

Council Bill or Resolution: C.B. 117313, gray tab 28

Date		Total	SB	BH	SC	TR	JG	NL	RC	TB	MO
	Yes										
	No										
	Abstain										
	Absent										

Budget Action description:

This green sheet amends and recommends passage as amended C.B. 117313 (tab 28 in the gray budget legislation notebook and attached in mark-up format), the Seattle Public Utilities (SPU) low income emergency assistance ordinance.

During its review of 2012-2014 water rates, the Seattle Public Utilities and Neighborhoods (SPUN) Committee recommended a change in the SMC 21.76.065 eligibility threshold for emergency assistance to low income customers with delinquent SPU bills. The SPUN Committee recommended that the threshold be changed from 125% of the federal poverty level to the 70% of state median income threshold used under SMC 21.76.030 to qualify customers for low income rate credits. About twice as many customers would be eligible for once-a-year emergency assistance under the new threshold. The new threshold is incorporated into the Council-revised 2012-2014 water rates (green sheet 5-1-A), shifting about $75,000 of 2012 Water Fund cost from low income customers to other water rate payers.

Wastewater and solid waste revenues also would be affected because SMC 21.76.065 also addresses bill assistance for those services. The new threshold could reduce 2012 revenues in each of those Funds by about $65,000. Because 2012 wastewater and solid waste rates are already set, the new threshold would require SPU to reduce base spending or financial performance to account for lost revenue.

The attached version of C.B. 117313 adds a January 1, 2012 effective date to the introduced version.

ORDINANCE _____

AN ORDINANCE relating to emergency assistance for low-income Seattle Public Utilities customers and amending Section 21.76.065 of the Seattle Municipal Code.

WHEREAS, low-income rate credits are available under Section 21.76.030 of the Seattle Municipal Code for Seattle Public Utility customers with annual household incomes that do not exceed 70 percent of the Washington State median income for the number of individuals in the household as computed annually by the state or the City; and

WHEREAS, once-a-year emergency assistance for paying delinquent Seattle Public Utilities bills is available under Section 21.76.065 of the Seattle Municipal Code to customers with annual household incomes that do exceed 125 percent of the poverty level for the number of individuals in the household as computed annually by the U.S. Government; and

WHEREAS, the Seattle City Council intends to establish a single threshold of 70% of Washington state median income to qualify low-income Seattle Public Utilities customers for both utility rate credits and emergency assistance for paying delinquent bills; and

WHEREAS, a 70% of Washington state median income threshold will simplify the City process for determining the eligibility of customers for low-income programs and will increase the number of eligible customers; and

WHEREAS, emergency assistance is available to low-income customers who are billed by Seattle Public Utilities (SPU) for utility services, and the Council wishes to clarify that the assistance applies to services included in the combined utilities bill issued by SPU, which includes water, wastewater and solid waste charges, NOW, THEREFORE**,**

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY OF SEATTLE AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. Effective January 1, 2012, Section 21.76.065 of the Seattle Municipal Code, which section was enacted by Ordinance 122174, is amended as follows:

21.76.065 Low income emergency assistance program.

A. Qualification. Upon satisfactory proof, emergency assistance shall be issued to each household for which a member of the household is billed, by SPU, for water, ((~~drainage,~~)) wastewater or solid waste services and:

1. Has annual income that, when combined with the annual income of all household members, does not exceed ((~~one hundred twenty-five (125) percent of the poverty level for the number of individuals in the household as computed annually by the U.S. Government~~))70 percent of the Washington State median income for the number of individuals in the household as computed annually by the state or the City; and

* * *

Section 2. This ordinance shall take effect and be in force 30 days after its approval by the Mayor, but if not approved and returned by the Mayor within ten days after presentation, it shall take effect as provided by Seattle Municipal Code Section 1.04.020.

Passed by the City Council the ____ day of _____, 2011, and signed by me in open session in authentication of its passage this _____ day of _____, 2011.

_____

President _____of the City Council

Approved by me this ____ day of _____, 2011.

_____

Michael McGinn, Mayor

Filed by me this ____ day of _____, 2011.

_____

Monica Martinez Simmons, City Clerk

(Seal)