

Ordinance No. 124156

Council Bill No. 117749

AN ORDINANCE expanding emergency bill payment assistance to help avoid water shut-off in low income households with minor children, and amending Seattle Municipal Code Section 21.76.065.

Related Legislation File: _____

Date Introduced and Referred: <u>4.1.13</u>	To: (committee): <u>Libraries, Utilities & Centur</u>
Date Re-referred:	To: (committee):
Date Re-referred:	To: (committee):
Date of Final Action: <u>4/8/13</u>	Date Presented to Mayor: <u>4/9/13</u>
Date Signed by Mayor: <u>4.15.13</u>	Date Returned to City Clerk: <u>4.17.13</u>
Published by Title Only <u>X</u>	Date Vetoed by Mayor:
Published in Full Text _____	
Date Veto Published:	Date Passed Over Veto:
Date Veto Sustained:	Date Returned Without Signature:

The City of Seattle – Legislative Department

Council Bill/Ordinance sponsored by: Jan Golden

Committee Action:

Date	Recommendation	Vote
<u>4.2.2013</u>	<u>PASS AS Amended</u> ^(AMS)	<u>2-0 SB 06</u>

This file is complete and ready for presentation to Full Council. _____

Full Council Action:

Date	Decision	Vote
<u>4/8/13</u>	<u>Passed</u>	<u>9-0</u>

CITY OF SEATTLE

ORDINANCE 124156

COUNCIL BILL 117749

AN ORDINANCE expanding emergency bill payment assistance to help avoid water shut-off in low income households with minor children, and amending Seattle Municipal Code Section 21.76.065.

WHEREAS, Seattle Municipal Code Section 21.76.040 provides 50 percent utility rate discounts for Seattle Public Utilities (SPU) customers with household incomes less than 70 percent of the state median income; and

WHEREAS, Seattle Municipal Code Section 21.76.065 provides once-a-year emergency bill payment assistance for low income SPU customers who face water shut-off; and

WHEREAS, despite the availability of discounted rates and emergency bill payment assistance, non-payment of SPU bills led to water shut-off for at least 138 low income SPU customers in 2012; and

WHEREAS, 68 of the low income households experiencing water shut-off in 2012 were known to have minor children, resulting in children going without clean running water for drinking and hygiene during the shut-off; and

WHEREAS, the City Council wishes to help ensure that children in low income families do not go without clean water needed for health and hygiene; NOW, THEREFORE,

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY OF SEATTLE AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. Effective July 1, 2013, Subsection 21.76.065.C of the Seattle Municipal Code is amended as follows:

21.76.065 Low income emergency assistance program.

* * *

C. Emergency Credit. Customers with SPU residential accounts, metered for a single family residence, and determined by the Human Services Department to be eligible under SMC 21.76.065.A, shall receive an emergency credit of ~~((fifty-))~~50(())

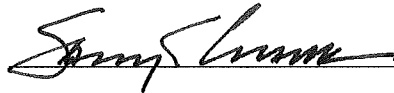


1 percent of the customer's delinquent bills up to a maximum credit defined in
2 subsection((paragraph)) D, but may only receive such credit once each calendar year
3 ((twelve (12) months))unless a minor child lives with the customer. When a minor
4 child lives in the household, the customer may receive an emergency credit twice
5 each calendar year.

6 * * *

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

10 Passed by the City Council the 8th day of April, 2013, and
11 signed by me in open session in authentication of its passage this
12 8th day of April, 2013.

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15 President _____ of the City Council

16 Approved by me this 15th day of April, 2013.

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20 Michael McGinn, Mayor

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22 Filed by me this 17 day of April, 2013.

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25 Monica Martinez Simmons, City Clerk

26 (Seal)



FISCAL NOTE FOR NON-CAPITAL PROJECTS

Department:	Contact Person/Phone:	CBO Analyst/Phone:
Legislative	Meg Moorehead 4-8929	

Legislation Title:

AN ORDINANCE expanding emergency bill payment assistance to help avoid water shut-off in low income households with minor children, and amending Seattle Municipal Code Section 21.76.065.

Summary of the Legislation:

This legislation increases the availability of emergency bill payment assistance from once a year to twice a year for low income Seattle Public Utilities (SPU) customers who are living with minor children and facing water shut-off due to non-payment of bills.

Background:

Keeping SPU bills affordable for low income customers and providing assistance to help avoid water shut-off for those customers has been a long-standing City Council priority. That priority has been reflected in Council action to expand eligibility for SPU low income rate discounts twice since 2002 and make emergency utility bill payment assistance available for low income customers facing water shut-off. Most recently, in 2012 the Council worked with SPU and the Human Services Department (HSD) to halve the required re-enrollment frequency for seniors and make rate discounts retroactive to the date a complete application is received. Yet despite the availability of 50% rate discounts and emergency bill payment assistance, in 2012 138 low income households experienced at least one water shut-off due to non-payment of bills. Sixty eight of those households had minor children. While water shut-off is very effective in motivating bill payment, it deprives households of clean water for drinking, bathing and flushing toilets. The health and hygiene impacts of water shut-off can be particularly hard felt by children. This legislation seeks to help avoid water shut-offs for low income customers living with minor children by increasing the availability of emergency SPU bill payment assistance from once a year to twice a year.

Please check one of the following:

This legislation does not have any financial implications.

This legislation has financial implications.



Appropriations:

Fund Name and Number	Department	Budget Control Level*	2013 Appropriation	2014 Anticipated Appropriation
TOTAL				

*See budget book to obtain the appropriate Budget Control Level for your department.

Appropriations Notes:

This legislation requires no additional appropriations because it does not affect spending but instead affects revenue received from payment of bills.

Anticipated Revenue/Reimbursement Resulting from this Legislation:

Fund Name and Number	Department	Revenue Source	2013 Revenue	2014 Revenue
Drainage/Wastewater Fund 44010 Water Fund 43000 Solid Waste Fund 45010	Seattle Public Utilities	Drainage, wastewater, water and solid waste services	(\$26,200)	(\$27,200)
TOTAL				

Revenue/Reimbursement Notes:

Under its Emergency Assistance Program (EAP) in 2012, SPU helped 1,142 low income customers avoid water shut-off by forgiving \$273,884 of delinquent bills. It is not known how many of those customers live with minor children because the customers are not asked for that information when applying for assistance. However an estimate of assisted customers living with children could be based on the Utility Discount Program (UDP), which collects household information while enrolling customers for low income rate discounts. UDP data show about 27% of enrolled households have children under 18. For estimating revenue losses from this legislation, it is assumed that the number of customers receiving EAP assistance will remain at 2012 levels and the percent of those households with minor children is the same as in the UDP. It is also assumed that the percent of UDP customers with children that experienced multiple water shut-offs in 2012 (17 out of 68 households or 25%) represents the percent of EAP households with children that will need emergency assistance more than once a year.

Based on those assumptions, in 2013 about 308 low income households with children might need emergency assistance, and 77 of those might need assistance more than once. If those households require assistance twice and each time use the maximum 2013 credit of \$340, then the utility revenue loss would be about \$26,200. In 2014 the maximum credit increases to \$353 and the utility revenue loss would be about \$27,200. A small reduction in General Subfund revenue from utility taxes will result from the collection of less rate revenue. Revenue losses could be more if the number of customers requesting emergency assistance increases. Losses also could be more (a total loss of \$104,700 in 2013) if all 308 low income EAP households with children receive



assistance twice each year. Revenue losses could be less if more customers avoid shut-off notices by halving their bills through UDP rate discounts – only 7% of 2012 EAP customers were enrolled for discounted rates. Losses also could be less if customers do not require the maximum credit. In 2012, the maximum credit was \$312 but the average credit granted was only \$240 – about 77% of the maximum credit.

Other Implications:

a) Does the legislation have indirect financial implications, or long-term implications?

Current SPU rates assume once-a-year emergency assistance. This legislation would result in collection of a little less revenue than assumed in rates, so that less is available to support SPU spending and financial policy compliance. Because low income emergency assistance is funded by other SPU customers, upcoming SPU rate proposals would be expected to include slightly higher rate increases for those other customers.

b) What is the financial cost of not implementing the legislation?

Not implementing this legislation would maintain the status quo. There would be no impact on rates, expenses or revenues. The cost of not implementing this legislation would be felt by low income families, not City government.

c) Does this legislation affect any departments besides the originating department?

HSD enrolls customers for low income utility rate discounts under a memorandum of agreement with SPU. As part of the enrollment, HSD may collect household information that helps identify low income customers living with minor children.

d) What are the possible alternatives to the legislation that could achieve the same or similar objectives?

A non-City funding source could be sought for expanding emergency assistance but no such source is immediately apparent.

e) Is a public hearing required for this legislation?

No

f) Is publication of notice with *The Daily Journal of Commerce* and/or *The Seattle Times* required for this legislation?

No

g) Does this legislation affect a piece of property?

No

Meg Moorehead
LEG no child without water FISC
March 11, 2013
Version #1

h) Other Issues:

List attachments to the fiscal note below:



CITY OF SEATTLE

ORDINANCE _____

COUNCIL BILL 117749

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THIS VERSION IS NOT ADOPTED



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10 Passed by the City Council the ____ day of _____, 2013, and
11 signed by me in open session in authentication of its passage this
12 ____ day of _____, 2013.

13 _____
14 _____
15 President _____ of the City Council

16
17 Approved by me this ____ day of _____, 2013.

18 _____
19 _____
20 Michael McGinn, Mayor

21
22 Filed by me this ____ day of _____, 2013.

23 _____
24 _____
25 Monica Martinez Simmons, City Clerk

26 (Seal)

THIS VERSION IS NOT ADOPTED



STATE OF WASHINGTON -- KING COUNTY

--SS.

296894
CITY OF SEATTLE, CLERKS OFFICE

No. 124154,155,156,157

Affidavit of Publication

The undersigned, on oath states that he is an authorized representative of The Daily Journal of Commerce, a daily newspaper, which newspaper is a legal newspaper of general circulation and it is now and has been for more than six months prior to the date of publication hereinafter referred to, published in the English language continuously as a daily newspaper in Seattle, King County, Washington, and it is now and during all of said time was printed in an office maintained at the aforesaid place of publication of this newspaper. The Daily Journal of Commerce was on the 12th day of June, 1941, approved as a legal newspaper by the Superior Court of King County.

The notice in the exact form annexed, was published in regular issues of The Daily Journal of Commerce, which was regularly distributed to its subscribers during the below stated period. The annexed notice, a

CT: TITLE ONLY ORDINANCES

was published on

04/25/13

The amount of the fee charged for the foregoing publication is the sum of \$74.25 which amount has been paid in full.



Affidavit of Publication

Subscribed and sworn to before me on

04/25/2013

Notary public for the State of Washington,
residing in Seattle

State of Washington, King County

City of Seattle Title Only Ordinances

The full text of the following legislation, passed by the City Council on April 8, 2013, and published below by title only, will be mailed upon request, or can be accessed at <http://clerk.seattle.gov>. For information on upcoming meetings of the Seattle City Council, please visit <http://www.seattle.gov/council/calendar>.

Contact: Office of the City Clerk at (206) 684-8344.

ORDINANCE NO. 124154

AN ORDINANCE appropriating money to pay certain audited claims and ordering the payment thereof.

ORDINANCE NO. 124155

AN ORDINANCE relating to City employment; authorizing execution of a collective bargaining agreement between the City of Seattle and the International Association of Fire Fighters, Local 2898 to be effective January 1, 2012 through December 31, 2014; providing payment therefor; and ratifying and confirming prior acts.

ORDINANCE NO. 124156

AN ORDINANCE expanding emergency bill payment assistance to help avoid water shut-off in low income households with minor children, and amending Seattle Municipal Code Section 21.76.065.

ORDINANCE NO. 124157

AN ORDINANCE related to the amendment of Section 4.08.070 of the Seattle Municipal Code to remove the \$25 fee charged by the Public Safety Civil Service Commission for police and fire entry-level exams.

Date of publication in the Seattle Daily Journal of Commerce, April 25, 2013.
4/25(296894)