



915 L Street., Suite 1210
Sacramento, CA 95814
(916) 326-5800
CMUA.org

April 10, 2020

The Honorable Gavin Newsom
Governor, State of California
State Capitol, First Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

Subject: Personal Protection Equipment for Publicly Owned Electric Utility and Public Water Agency Essential Workforces

Dear Governor Newsom,

Thank you for your steady and clear-eyed leadership during these difficult times as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. It is under that leadership, and working together, that California will get through this crisis. The California Municipal Utilities Association (CMUA) represents 44 not-for-profit publicly owned electric utilities (POUs) that provide electric service to more than 22% of Californians and over 50 public water agencies that provide water to over 70% of the state. In light of your initiative to secure personal protection equipment (PPE) for the state, I write to respectfully provide input on the need for PPE for the Essential Workforce employees of POU's and public water agencies.

CMUA's members are taking necessary actions to ensure their ability to maintain the essential services of reliable electricity and safe and clean drinking water while responding to the needs of their residents by suspending shutoffs and offering customer assistance programs when appropriate. While safe and reliable electricity and water is always the number one priority for CMUA's members, there is an even greater emphasis on that mission as Californians shelter at home, especially with handwashing being key for Californians to reduce the risk of COVID-19 spread.

The State Public Health Officer has designated certain electric and water agency employees as part of the Essential Workforce. These employees work at water treatment plants, power plants, other critical infrastructure locations, in neighborhoods making necessary repairs, carrying out wildfire prevention activities, such as vegetation management, and more, keeping the electric and water infrastructure operating.

To reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission among their Essential Workforces, CMUA's members are changing the way they work. For example, many of CMUA's members are using staggered shifts or smaller teams of Essential Workforce employees. However, due to the nature of the work, there are times when electric and water Essential Workforce employees need to be in close proximity to each other, making PPE, such as masks and gloves, essential to the job. For example, Essential Workforce employees in grid control rooms often work in open floor plan environments with no walls or separation between desks and the work requires frequent consultation between employees. Some work activities also require employees to be in the community, potentially exposing them to the virus. These Essential Workforce employees conducting field work also often work in teams to complete the necessary work.

CMUA's members are working with their PPE suppliers and local emergency response officials to maintain supplies. However, CMUA members are concerned that they may not have the necessary PPE on hand – especially in the weeks and months to come – to protect their Essential Workforce employees. It is critical to the state's COVID-19 response and recovery that California's POU's and water agencies have healthy Essential Workforces that can maintain reliable and safe electric and water systems, and PPE is vital for those employees.

This week you announced a new effort to “obtain PPE of all stripes – for health care workers, grocery store workers, DMV workers, and frontline employees doing well checks.” **As you work with the Legislature and implement the new PPE program, we respectfully request that you consider the needs of the Essential Workforces of the state's POU's and public water agencies. Specifically, we encourage you to provide appropriate priority access for the Essential Workforce of California's POU's and public water agencies, when there is a need.** Some POU's and public water agencies may be better situated when it comes to PPE access and we do not think, at least in this moment, there is a blanket need across the entire POU and public water agency sectors. In addition, we recognize that there is broad need for PPE across a variety of essential sectors, most prominently the healthcare sector; our hope is that POU and public water agency Essential Workforce, based on need, can be given appropriate consideration in the disbursement of PPE.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. CMUA's members are committed to serve their communities and we as an organization are continuing to monitor how this pandemic is impacting POU and water agency operations and finances and will continue to remain in touch with your office and the Legislature as we learn more. Please contact me at bmoline@cmua.org or (916) 827-7027 if CMUA can provide additional information or if we be of assistance in any way.

Sincerely,



Barry Moline
Executive Director
California Municipal Utilities Association

Cc: The Honorable Toni Atkins, President pro Tempore, California State Senate
The Honorable Anthony Rendon, Speaker of the California State Assembly
The Honorable Shannon Grove, Senate Republican Leader
The Honorable Marie Waldron, Assembly Republican Leader
The Honorable Holly Mitchell, Chair of the Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Committee
The Honorable Phil Ting, Chair of the Assembly Budget Committee
The Honorable Jim Nielsen, Vice Chair of the Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Committee
The Honorable Jay Obernolte, Vice Chair of the Assembly Budget Committee
Mark Ghilarducci, Director of the Governor's Office of Emergency Services
Kelly Bosler, Director of the California Department of Finance
Edelstein, Gilbert, Robson and Smith