



## ORDINANCE TO PROHIBIT AND ENFORCE WATER THEFT AND UNAUTHORIZED WATER USE

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### Riverside Public Utilities

#### Board of Public Utilities

September 12, 2022

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## BACKGROUND

1. Part of the RPU water loss program which was discussed at Water Committee on January 12, 2022.
2. Water Theft Ordinance goal is to deter unauthorized consumption and thus reduce water loss with minimal costs to the City.
3. To meet upcoming State compliance requirements.



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## BACKGROUND

4. California Governor approved SB 427 on July 23, 2021.
5. Authorizes the legislative body of a local agency, to adopt a water theft ordinance and specifies specific fine amounts.
6. Provides the definition on what “water theft” entails and how to be used, which is found in Penal Code section 498.
7. This process requires the adoption of an ordinance.



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## DISCUSSION

1. The California Government Code §53069.45 defines Water Theft as an action to divert, tamper, or reconnect water utility services.
2. Violators of this section will be liable for the total costs incurred by Riverside Public Utilities (RPU) to respond to an unauthorized or improper connection.



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## DISCUSSION

3. Using water from the water system without RPU's authorization is considered a crime
4. Unauthorized connections pose serious contamination risks to RPU's water supply and can cause expensive damage to RPU's water delivery system
5. Extra cost burden to RPU's customers.
6. Water theft makes it more difficult for RPU to account for the water being used by customers accurately
7. The revenue lost from water theft is ultimately passed on to paying customers.



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## DISCUSSION

8. Violators will be charged the unauthorized estimated water use, and a penalty as specified in the California Government Code Section 53069.45:
  - a. For water theft and unauthorized water use fines shall be \$130 for the first violation, \$700 for the second violation, and \$1,300 for the third violation and each additional violation thereafter within one year of the first violation;
  - b. For all other violations fines shall be \$1,000 for the first violation, \$2,000 for the second violation, and \$3,000 for each additional violation within one year of the first violation.



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## DISCUSSION

Adopting this ordinance to

- a. Better align with the new state water conservation requirement regarding the water loss performance standards
- b. Help in the efforts of water loss reduction
- c. Help recover related costs due to the unauthorized use of water
- d. The ordinance would be codified into the Riverside Municipal Code (RMC).



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## STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT



### Priority 4 - Environmental Stewardship

Goal No. 4.2 – Sustainably manage local water resources to maximize reliability and advance water reuse to ensure safe, reliable, and affordable water to our community.



### Priority 5 - High Performing Government

Utilize technology, data, and process improvement strategies to increase efficiencies, guide decision making, and improve access to and delivery of financially sustainable City services.

### Cross-Cutting Threads



Community Trust



Fiscal Responsibility

Sustainability &  
Resiliency

Equity



Innovation



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## RECOMMENDATION

That the Board of Public Utilities recommend that the City Council adopt an ordinance for Chapter 14.23 of the Riverside Municipal Code to prohibit and enforce water theft and unauthorized water use.

